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Domestic economy,
to 1858

2, Woman - Duties, etc.

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10/25/07
R.B.

DOMESTIC DUTIES;

OR,

INSTRUCTIONS

TO

YOUNG MARRIED LADIES,

ON THE

**MANAGEMENT OF THEIR HOUSEHOLDS, AND THE REGULATION
OF THEIR CONDUCT IN THE VARIOUS RELATIONS
AND DUTIES OF**

MARRIED LIFE.

BY MRS. WILLIAM PARKES.

Every wise woman buildeth her house; but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.....Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.....Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.—*Proverbs.*

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THIRD AMERICAN FROM THE THIRD LONDON
NOTES AND ALTERATIONS ADAPTED
AMERICAN READERS

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M.d.c.

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"Domestic Duties; or, Instructions to young married Ladies, on the management of their households, and the regulation of their conduct in the various relations and duties of Married Life. By Mrs. William Parkes.

"'Every wise woman buildeth her house; but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.....Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.....Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.'—*Proverbs*.

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FRED. J. BETTS,

Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

DOMESTIC DUTIES,

etc. etc.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

How great is the change which is instantly effected in the situation of a woman, by the few solemn words pronounced at the altar! She, who the moment before was, without authority or responsibility, a happy, perhaps a careless, member of one family, finds herself, as if by magic, at the head of another, and involved in duties of the highest importance. If she possess good sense, her earnest wish will be, to act with propriety in her new sphere. Many, no doubt, by previous judicious instruction, assisted by their own observations, are well prepared to sustain their part with judgment and temper; but some there are whose situations, or whose dispositions, have led them into other pursuits; and who, consequently, find themselves, as soon as they are married, without that information and those principles of action by which their future conduct ought to be governed. For the guidance of these the following pages are intended.

The married and single state equally demand the exercise and improvement of the best qualities of the heart and the mind. Sincerity, discretion, a well-governed temper, forgetfulness of self, charitable allowance for the frailty of human nature, are all requisite in both conditions. But the single woman being, in general, responsible for

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her own conduct solely, is chiefly required to cultivate passive qualities. To fall easily into the domestic current of regulations and habits ; to guard with care against those attacks of caprice and ill humour which might disturb its course ; to assist, rather than to take the lead, in all family arrangements, are among her duties ; while the married woman, in whose hands are the happiness and welfare of others, is called upon to lead, to regulate, and to command. She has to examine every point in the new situation into which she is transplanted ; to cultivate in herself, and to encourage in her husband, rational and domestic tastes, which may prove sources of amusement in every stage of their lives, and particularly at the latter period, when other resources shall have lost their power to charm. She has to proportion, not as in the single state, her own personal expenses merely, but the whole expenditure of her household to the income which she is now to command ; and in this part of her duty there is often exercise for self-denial as well as for judgment. The condition of her husband may require her to abandon, not only habits of expense, but even those of generosity. It may demand from her a rigid adherence to economy, neither easy nor pleasant, when contrary habits and tastes have, under more liberal circumstances, been fixed and cultivated. Such alterations in habit may at first be regarded as sacrifices, but, in the end, they will meet their compensation in the satisfaction which always results from the consciousness of acting with propriety and consistency. Sometimes, however, the means of indulging liberal and generous propensities are extended by marriage. Where this is the case, that extreme attention to economy, which circumscribes the expenditure very much within the boundaries of the income, would betray a narrow and mean spirit, and would have the effect to abridge the blessings which by affluence may be dispensed around.

No woman should place herself at the head of a family without feeling the importance of the character which she has to sustain. Her example alone may afford better instruction than either precepts or admonitions, both to her children and servants. By a "daily beauty" in her life, she may present a model by which all around her will insensibly mould themselves. "Knowledge is power" only when it fits us for the station in which we find ourselves placed ; then it gives decision to character ; and every varying circumstance of life is met with calmness, for the principle to act upon is at hand ; then we are prepared either to add our share to the amusement and interest of general society, or to lend our strength, on the demand of our nearest ties, to support, comfort, or instruct. Duty will not be an appalling word to those whose minds are properly framed. Indeed, they who have made it the rule of their lives, have found it also the source of their happiness ; while, in others, the consciousness of having neglected its precepts, has corroded every power of enjoyment.

As dialogue admits of great latitude in detail, the author has taken advantage of that form to convey the following remarks to her reader, whom she supposes to be a young and inexperienced house-keeper, and uninformed in all the minutiae of domestic management. To such only she ventures to offer her work, as a basis upon which good sense, when aided by experience, may afterwards establish a more complete and perfect system of *Domestic Duty*.

PART I.

SOCIAL RELATIONS.

CONVERSATION I.

PRELIMINARY SKETCH OF THE OBLIGATIONS OF MARRIED LIFE.

Mrs. L.—Since the ceremony which you, my dear Madam, lately witnessed, and which was the commencement of a new era in my life, I am become aware of my ignorance in regard to the obligations now incumbent on me as a married woman. To your experience I refer for instruction regarding the extent and nature of my new duties, and the best mode of discharging them.

Mrs. B.—It may be well to give you, at first, a sketch of your new situation, which shall include a range of duty, belonging, not to you individually, but to married women in the great bulk of society, of those who are not members of either of the extreme ranks of the community, the highest and the lowest, but who have in common certain obligations and duties to discharge, which are varied, by the fortuitous circumstances of rank and fortune, more in degree than in number. For instance, and in the first place, every woman by marriage is placed at the head of a family, and in some degree or other acquires importance in society. This circumstance, alone, imposes on her an obligation to frame her conduct so as to render it at least irreproachable in the eyes of others, if not a

model for imitation. In a greater or less number she has dependents around her, not only expecting to derive from her comfort and prosperity, but unconsciously regulating their conduct by hers, and imbibing from her precepts and opinions favourable or otherwise to their morals. She may have, in the course of time, a family of children around her—to them she ought to appear as an infallible guide and example; untarnished by habits, which, in their influence, would affect, prejudicially, the character of youth, and incapable of uttering sentiments in any way injurious to the cause of virtue.

In the next place, a woman increases, by her marriage, her family-ties and relationships. These give her new friendships to cultivate, and to cement with esteem and affection—while those previously formed are still to be preserved and maintained. This is by no means an unimportant point of attention; for the happiness of many a married couple has been materially affected by injudicious conduct towards both new and old connections. Jealousies and petty family-feuds spring from this source, and diminish the respectability, as well as the comfort of domestic life; to avert them needs only the exercise of good sense and good temper.

The mistress of a family has, too, the power, generally, of being the spring of its movements, and the regulator of its habits. Exerting this power properly, she sees around her every one obedient to the laws of order and regularity. The laborious parts of household occupations are all performed without unnecessary pressure, and the consequent comfort is felt by the whole family, and especially shown in the satisfied countenances of those who perform the work. They, knowing exactly their daily task, can by diligence earn for themselves periods of relaxation and rest, which would be completely lost but for the regularity prevailing throughout the family arrangements. Where this is neglected, discontent and

ill-humour have constant exciting causes in the confusion and discomfort which pervade the family.

Another point of duty, which usually devolves on the married woman, and which demands the constant exercise of judgment and prudence, is, the expenditure of that portion of income allotted to household exigences. Here judgment should direct and determine her to a just division of that sum between luxuries and essentials: prudence should secure her adherence to that division, and should regulate all the minutiae of her expenditure. Extravagance and inattention to this branch of domestic management would be destructive of the comfort of almost every family, and perhaps fatal to its prosperity.

The married woman has also obligations of society to discharge, which may be said to extend beyond the bounds of family connections and relationship:—she has to cultivate suitable acquaintance; to perform the various offices of good neighbourhood; to be social, friendly, and charitable.

In the last place, the married woman has duties to herself to perform. These regard the government of herself in temper; in subjecting her mind and affections to her reason; in restraining and correcting propensities and habits prejudicial to the happiness of married life; in the disposal of her time, the improvement of her mental powers, the cultivation of morality, and the duties of religion.

Of all these social, domestic, and personal obligations, her husband is the centre: when they are properly discharged, his welfare and happiness are certainly promoted; and his esteem, affection, and confidence established on a permanent basis. In neglecting them, he is neglected, his respectability diminished, and his domestic peace and comfort destroyed.

Mrs. L.—This is not a more enlarged view of the subject than every married woman ought, I think, to take, and

yet how many pursue a plan of action on a far narrower scale. Some appear to enclose themselves, as it were, within the walls of their dwellings, and are scarcely sensible of any cares or duties beyond them.

Mrs. B.—So limited a scope of action has a tendency to circumscribe the powers of the mind, and even to contract the affections. The mind, likewise, often exercises itself prejudicially, when not sufficiently employed in important concerns. Thus you may sometimes observe women of considerable powers occupied with needless anxieties; destroying health by solicitude to preserve it; fretful and anxious on the subject of children, servants, and all the world; and oftentimes self-willed and capitious, only for want of employment.

Mrs. L.—There can be no doubt that home should contain the strongest affections of the wife and parent, and should be the seat of her vigilance and cares; but I have yet to learn if these are sufficient to engage, exclusively, the heart and mind, and to close them against a larger field for their exercise and employment.

Mrs. B.—Any extreme in conduct can rarely be necessary, and can as seldom be pursued without some injurious effect. There are instances, it is true, in which circumstances demand devotedness to household concerns, and to maternal cares, and which render such a line of conduct highly praiseworthy. But those whose station and affluence enable them to command the service of others in household cares, are not to be commended if they toil through the duties their servants ought to perform. In doing this, they are led to neglect the more varied and extensive claims which are attached to their sphere of life, and thereby to diminish their value in society, and to render their characters, as a whole, imperfect.

Mrs. L.—And yet, confined and unpleasing as such a character is, is it not preferable to one that pursues an opposite extreme?—one who, selfishly, regardless of

family-duties, leads a life of dissipation and amusement ; whose heart and soul are always in the world, and never at home ?

Mrs. B.—Such a wife or mother is worthless. She neglects the chief and positive duties of life, without fulfilling those of a minor character with any good effect. At home her example is injurious, and if abroad she possess any influence, it is merely of a temporary nature, resting, probably, on no surer ground than that of fashion. In portraying the *beau-idéal* of a married woman, I should describe one not absorbed in any single part, but attentive to the whole of life's obligations ; one who neglects nothing,—who regulates and superintends her household concerns ; attends to, watches over and guides her children, and yet is ever ready to consider, in moderation, the demands upon her time, which the numerous and various claims of society may make. Such appears to me to be a right sketch of the character of the married woman.

Mrs. L.—This is not to be denied. And now may I repeat my request that you will enter into details with me, remembering my entire ignorance on most of the topics connected with the duties of my new character ?

Mrs. B.—Willingly. And we will arrange and pursue our conversations by a regular plan, so that, considered together, they may form for you a system of Domestic Duty.

In our *first part*, the claims of social life shall be discussed. In this may be comprized all those which regard our friends, acquaintance, relations, husband, children, and servants.

In the *second part*, we will treat of the management of the house and household.

The *third part* may contain strictures on the disposal of time,—and the fourth and concluding portion of our system shall be confined to moral and religious duties.

for her friends ; but we will put aside such considerations for those which regard the formation of friendships depending chiefly on choice. I think I have a short manuscript essay on this very subject, which, perhaps, you will favour me by reading aloud, allowing me to preface it by remarking on the precipitancy with which young people often rush into intimacies. I am far from desiring to encourage in any one a suspicious disposition towards strangers, or to inculcate the necessity of suspecting obliquity of character beneath a pleasing and amiable exterior : but my caution is directed against rashness in judgment ; nor would I have you only correct its decisions when it weighs the merits of the agreeable in society. You suffer it to commit an injustice of equal magnitude, if you decide upon the total absence of qualities worthy of your esteem, upon no other grounds than perceiving awkward and rough manners, with an displeasing expression of countenance.

ON THE CHOICE OF FRIENDS.

Mrs. L.—“ It has been said, ‘ Show me your friends, and I will tell you what you are.’ We may apply this saying to our own use, and, by the qualities which we seek in our friends, we may unveil to ourselves the bearings of our own characters. If their conduct deviate generally from the rule of right ; if their tastes are perverted from what is pure and innocent, and they find pleasure in the breach of morality ; if their sentiments, as well as their conduct, betray deficiency of principle, and their tempers indifference to the welfare of others ; if, perceiving these traits and qualities in them, we still court and enjoy their society, repose confidence in their judgment, and rely on the constancy of their regard for us, we may assure ourselves that our tastes, also, are neither pure nor innocent ; that we are neither firm in principle, nor wise in our deci-

sions ; but are profaning the name of friendship, and denying ourselves its true enjoyment. Upright and virtuous characters, and persons of a genuine taste, seek congenial qualities in their associates, and having found them, their mutual esteem and regard become firmly implanted ; and as long as they continue each intrinsically the same, their friendship remains unshaken either by the storms of adversity, or by those minor frailties which still must cling to human nature. Such friendships are our joy in prosperity, and our solace in seasons of grief and misfortune. Intimacies, misnamed friendships, when founded on a less worthy basis, may please the fancy for a time, but can afford no permanent satisfaction ; for where mutual esteem and confidence cannot subsist, lasting pleasure refuses to dwell.

“ A true friend must be untarnished by vicious pursuits, his soul displayed in the uprightness of his actions, and in the simplicity of his demeanour. His benevolence should not consist merely in acts of charity or beneficence, but should pervade his sentiments, and influence his judgment in regarding the conduct of his fellow-creatures. If he is consistent in his expectations, and ambitious chiefly of distinction in virtue, his temper will be untried by many of the mortifications which beset the misjudging and worldly minded. If he is willing also (not inconsistently with judgment and prudence) to stretch forth an assisting hand to save his friends when sinking under the trials of adversity, he is worthy of our high regard ; nor should we deem the sacrifice of every uncongenial propensity in ourselves as too great, if it enable us to form with him a compact of mutual esteem and regard.

“ Such are the qualities and characteristics of him whom we should desire for our friend. That friendships are often interrupted by dissension, sometimes utterly destroyed, must be attributed to the disqualifications and imperfections of the parties themselves. Thus it is in many things :

Providence supplies us with blessings and the means of enjoyment, which our frailties alone either annul or diminish in value.

“ There are, however, other obstacles to the permanent enjoyment of true friendship, which, although still attributable to human imperfection, are such as we cannot reasonably expect to surmount ; and which, in the formation of our friendships, we should, if possible, avoid encountering. Of these impediments, great inequality of rank and fortune may be first considered.

“ It is true, that friendships, apparently sincere in their outset, have been frequently formed between those of unequal stations in society. But their unbroken continuance has always depended upon the peculiar excellence of each party. It can rarely happen that individuals, whose earliest years have been under directly opposite influences, can perfectly assimilate with each other in opinion, prejudice, and habit. Each having different spheres of action to call their powers into play, and different views and objects in life, can scarcely judge accurately of the proprieties which belong to their opposite ranks, so as to give each to the other good counsel when in circumstances of doubt or of difficulty. This alone would touch a vital principle of true friendship, namely, mutual confidence in each other's judgment

“ Should the friend of superior rank betray any mark of contempt for the station filled by the other, their friendship would certainly be shaken, because we can scarcely avoid identifying ourselves with the rank we hold, nor divest our minds of the persuasion, that if that is despised, we, too, share a similar portion of contempt. Resentment, and subsequent estrangement, must ensue. Indeed, the nature of his friendship would be equivocal, who could brook contempt from one whom he himself held in esteem. Whatever destroys the feeling of equality between friends, must weaken the bonds that unite them. Even the muni-

ficence of a friend may in some cases have this effect. It opens a debtor and creditor account, which, perhaps, is not to be closed until the debtor has relinquished his independence of opinion and sentiment, and his own free agency in all his concerns. The obliged friend has sometimes no alternative but to be termed ungrateful, or to become time-serving.

“Disproportion in age is not always a favourable circumstance in friendship. It is desirable that the young should have the benefit of the experience of age; yet, from feelings peculiar to each of these stages of life, great intimacy seldom subsists between them, without frequent interruptions to its friendly course. The aged expect deference from the young, both in manners and opinions; and the young, presumptuous and inconsiderate, are not always willing to show it. The old think and act in unison with a generation passing away, and the young, although reaping much from the wisdom and acquisitions in knowledge of that generation, still cannot, nor ought, to tread undeviatingly in the paths of their forefathers. Superior light appears to break in upon them, but, in diffusing this, they do not always evince sufficient regard for the prejudices of older minds. The declining generation consider the young as rash, who, in return, regard the opinions of their elders as mere prejudice.

“Besides these points of difference, the pursuits of each naturally separate them. The one takes its pleasures from passive circumstances, and in rest rather than in active employments, while the state of the other demands the constant exercise of its energies both physical and mental.

“Inequality of mental endowment is another bar to the formation of friendship. Commiseration may influence an individual of superior intellect in his conduct towards one of weaker parts and judgment, and may prompt him to perform every good office of friendly regard. But a free, equal intercourse of mind cannot subsist between

them ; the one would be perpetually disappointed by the deficiency in the apprehension of the other, who, on his part, would be unable to appreciate his value, or to enter into his pleasures.

“Such are among the hinderances to the formation and continuance of perfect friendship ; and their enumeration leads us to the melancholy conclusion, that it is a blessing rarely, to be enjoyed while we wear the garb of mortality. That which will partake of most of its characteristics must be established upon the rock of moral worth ; and, as far as it can be, secured, upon *equality* in rank and fortune, in years and in intellect.”

Mrs. L.—After all the principles we may lay down on this important subject, it requires considerable firmness to adhere to them. I have known intimacies contracted in opposition to the dictates of the judgment, merely for want of the spirit of resistance to petty influences and circumstances ; which is, I think, frequently the reason that trifles turn the scale against judgment. But I will now request you to tell me how far you approve of friendships formed between married women and the opposite sex ?

Mrs. B.—To mark the degree of intimacy which may subsist with the male sex, where there is no near relationship, propriety has formed a boundary which no woman, who places a proper value on her own good report, will attempt to pass. It is true, she may pique herself on her innocence and purity of thought, and commence an imprudent war against appearances ; but she ought to be aware that the knowledge alone of acting against appearances must, inevitably, injure that very purity of thought which she prides herself in possessing. If female intimacies are sometimes objectionable to the husband, those with the other sex cannot but be peculiarly so, because there is a danger in them, which tends to deprive him of the exclusive preference he has a right to expect from his wife. Such intimacies, then, duty and propriety both forbid ;

and many, originally well-intentioned women, would have been spared degradation from happiness and honour, had they reposed with less confidence on themselves, and not ventured beyond the limits sanctioned by the world ; experience having often demonstrated that their extension is productive of misery to individuals, and of mischief to society.

Mrs. L.—But are all previous intimacies with the other sex to be finally dropped, the moment a woman bestows her hand at the altar ?

Mrs. B.—Certainly not. But all communications with the other sex must be carried on with the confidence and full approbation of the husband. A married lady may even continue a correspondence with an unmarried gentleman, provided her husband be a tacit party to all the communications of such an intercourse. But unless a peculiar tie render it desirable to continue such a correspondence, commenced before marriage, I cannot but recommend that it should be given up after marriage, lest its continuance should engender unpleasant suspicions in the husband's mind, which seldom fail to create serious inconveniences, and mortify and degrade a woman even in her own eyes. Perhaps the character of the individual with whom she corresponds, and the circumstances which gave rise to the friendship which subsists between him and herself, may render it difficult to adopt more distant conduct towards him. In this case, her husband should also become intimately acquainted with the causes of the intimacy, that his mind may be fortified against the inroads of jealousy by entire approbation of the line of conduct she pursues.

Mrs. L.—Well ! there is more liberality in these sentiments than I was led to expect ; and, as such is the case, surely there can be no objection to the continuance of the closest correspondence with her own family connections ?

Mrs. B.—Marriage affords no reason why the corres-

pondence between family-connections should be suffered to languish.

Mrs. L.—But, if a newly-married lady happens to be at a great distance from her family-connections, how far is it proper, or essential in reference to her new character, to maintain with them an extensive epistolary correspondence? Would it not very much interfere with her domestic duties?

Mrs. B.—After marriage various may be the impediments in the way of personal intercourse with relations and friends, and but for the communication which writing affords, we should lose a source of happiness arising from keeping up an interest in their welfare. Still, an extensive correspondence cannot be continued after marriage, consistently with the increased duties in which domestic concerns and good neighbourhood involve many married women. The constant locomotion these require tends to destroy also the relish for such tacit conversation, and for the still life which, in idea, an absent spot presents, and which are opposed to the active scenes and employments in which the married woman finds herself called upon to take her share. It may, therefore, seem needless to guard her against the attempt to carry on an extensive correspondence; a few months may, perhaps, see it gradually diminished, and her letters become, "like angel visits, few and far between," until they cease altogether. As it is not, however, pleasant to incur the charge of "changeableness" and "forgetfulness," to which this natural death of her correspondence would render her liable, the young married woman should select a chosen few from among those friends, whom sterling qualities render valuable, and whose friendship she may hope to retain to the end of her life.

In a pecuniary point of view, also, an extensive correspondence may prove a serious evil in the marriage-state. It is one of those enjoyments which, however agreeable,

is not essential ; and a wife is not less responsible for squandering money, under certain circumstances, on the trifling gossiping of an extensive epistolary correspondence, than in the purchase of superfluous ornaments. No postage can be regarded as extravagant, when it is the means of conveying intelligence of the welfare of our relations and friends ; but to a man of limited income the expense of daily packets addressed to his wife, which contain nothing but common-place remarks, or every-day news, is both an oppressive and injurious tax.

Mrs. L.—Is it necessary that a married woman should permit her letters to be opened by her husband ?

Mrs. B.—A sensible man, who has confidence in the prudence of his wife, will have no desire to assume that privilege which his situation as a husband confers upon him ; nor to infringe on the sacredness of her correspondence. The slightest tincture of suspicion is incompatible with the mutual happiness of a husband and wife. A married woman, therefore, although her husband may not desire it, should voluntarily place her letters in his hands, feeling that in so doing she is merely sharing with him the pleasure they may bestow, or alleviating the poignancy of grief their intelligence may impart to her. It is always preferable, however, for both parties to hold the correspondence of the other sacred, and not even to desire to become a party in it.

Mrs. L.—But I should suppose it impossible for a married woman to have a correspondence which should be concealed, under any circumstances, from her husband ?

Mrs. B.—It is certainly more advisable to have none which he cannot inspect ; but circumstances may arise, in the progress of life, to involve the married woman in a correspondence in which it might not be proper to make her husband a party. A letter may convey to her communications relative to an early friend or acquaintance, which are confidentially imparted to her. Under these circum-

stances, though she might not be willing to betray the confidence of her friend, she ought to satisfy the mind of her husband, with sufficient reasons for not being more explicit towards him. If she can convince him that the correspondence has no reference to herself, but relates to the private concerns of her friend, it will scarcely be sufficient to excite any interest in his mind, or to create the slightest suspicion unfavourable towards his wife.

Mrs. L.—But should a husband desire to read a confidential letter, would a woman be justified in refusing it?

Mrs. B.—Not at all. The first object of every woman in married life should be the happiness of her husband, as connected with her own; therefore any concealment, in which he does not concur, should be avoided. And if there be a proper understanding between them, it can scarcely be considered as a breach of trust, should the wife think fit to confide the secret of her friend to her husband; nor should any one, in making private communications to a married friend, expect or demand more from her than a conditional promise of silence towards her husband.

Mrs. L.—I perceive, however, that the comfort of married life may be disturbed by any reserve towards a husband, even though on subjects that have no connection with the family circle.

Mrs. B.—It is very true; and yet it is almost impossible to avoid it in every case. But, if mutual confidence subsisted between the married, its inconveniences would be lessened: neither of them would then suspect the other of sharing any confidence of an injudicious nature, or any that would be likely to bring trouble into the family circle. The propriety of maintaining such a reserve towards a husband, depends chiefly upon the nature of the confidence reposed by the friend. If it have no relation to her own concerns, and if she is merely the depositary of a secret communication, and not employed as an active agent in it,

there may not be much inconvenience attending it. But if called upon to act and assist, reserve towards her husband should then cease ; for I can perceive but few things in which she could, unknown to her husband, assist her friend, without practising some degree of duplicity. Let me therefore advise you to decline participating in the confidence of any one who would require your assistance unknown to your husband.

CONVERSATION III.

NEW ACQUAINTANCES, CHOICE OF.—DESCRIPTION OF PEOPLE TO BE AVOIDED.—GOSSIPING.—SCANDAL.—FLATTERY.

Mrs. L.—How is a lady who settles at a distance from her own family-connections to select her acquaintance?

Mrs. B.—There are not many women who have the power to select their acquaintance after marriage. Most commonly they must enter, without much discrimination, into the circle in which marriage places them ; and this is particularly the case with the wives of professional men, whose interest it is, not to be forgotten by those from whom they expect employment, nor to remain unknown to the public.

Mrs. L.—But are there not some points to be observed in the formation of an acquaintance, which should always be firmly adhered to?

Mrs. B.—There are several. Thus, it is evident, that those whose characters and conduct stand impeached of any thing dishonourable should never be admitted into good society. This should be a rule with every one, of

which neither interest, policy, nor even the pleadings of pity, should induce the neglect. As general security and good order require that the transgressors of the law of the land should pay its penalties, so the purity and comfort of society depend upon the banishment of those who have proved themselves unworthy of its sanction. It is true the observance of this rule may, sometimes, deprive our circles of wit and talents equally amusing and instructive ; but wit and talents, unaccompanied by moral worth, allure to danger. If the young view the vicious with approbation, half the barrier, in their minds, between right and wrong, is broken down : and an inlet made to more serious attacks on innocence and on virtuous principles.

Mrs. L.—Is not this rule of exclusion likely to check the desire of many to quit the paths of vice and dishonour ; or to throw within the shade of melancholy those who, but for one unfortunate step, might have ranked with the innocent and happy ?

Mrs. B.—Your remark is just : but, still, we must bear in mind, that repentance is not genuine unless it have a higher aim than merely to be restored to the world's approbation. The world has no power to heal the wounds of the mind, therefore its acts of grace, in restoring the fallen to his place in society, would be useless as well as pernicious. He who has fallen by his own misdemeanours, must be a warning to others, and pay, by exclusion from unspotted society, the penalty for his transgressions. Men practise this exclusion, in the most rigid manner, towards individuals of their own sex who have failed in the observance of those principles of conduct which, in polite society, are regarded as essential to constitute the gentleman and man of honour ; and, this being the case, how much more necessary is it for virtuous women to refuse to admit into their society those who have forfeited that character ! Were this barrier broken down, the female world would lose that well-merited homage which it now

receives from men ; and, like fallen angels, become more contemptible by a comparison between their degraded state and their prior purity. I knew Alicia, who was the admiration of every eye for the beauty and the symmetry of her person ; and eminently calculated to be the fascinating centre of every company, for the liveliness of her manners, the sweetness of her temper, and the brilliancy of her wit ; but, nevertheless, she was the most wretched of her sex. I have seen her at an assembly, leaning upon the arm of a man of rank, pass through the room, and cast a look of ineffable contempt upon the other females of the party ; and yet, when the artificial spirits, which the occasion and the situation had excited, subsided, and she found herself alone in her apartment, she would burst into tears, sink into a fit of despondency, and envy the plainest and most neglected female in the party she had quitted. The truth was, that Alicia had, unfortunately, deviated from the path of rectitude, the strict observance of which alone can gain respect to the female character ; and found, from sad experience, that the very men who flocked around her in public, pouring out the incense of flattery to her beauty, and sacrificing at the shrine of her talents, withdrew their wives and daughters from her society, as if from a source of contamination : and thus shut out from the fellowship of the spotless part of her own sex, she felt the worm ever gnawing a heart which, if it had remained innocent, was fitted to have been the seat of the most enviable felicity.

Mrs. L.—I trust such situations are rare, and that the hand of mercy is extended, even in this world, to the penitent. But, independent of the obstacles arising from deviations from virtue, what other circumstances of conduct should prevent a newly-married woman from seeking, or accepting, the acquaintance of her neighbours ?

Mrs. B.—There are some propensities over which society has little control, although they are frequently

found to be mischievous and vexatious. Of such are the love of scandal, gossiping, and ridicule. All that can be done towards checking their progress in society must be by the force of example, and by making those who are addicted to them aware, that their company would be more welcome were their conversation of a higher stamp. It would, perhaps, appear an assumption of too great superiority were a young married lady to profess an intention to exclude from her society such delinquents as the scandal-monger and gossip ; but if she feel obliged to tolerate them among her *acquaintance*, she need not select them for her *friends*. Intimacies with them would be ill-advised, and might be dangerous. No degree of intimacy can insure safety with the genuine lover of scandal. By such persons any circumstance that may serve as the basis of a good story, or that may find an interest in the malignant propensities of others, is carefully hindered from smouldering and perhaps dying away for want of a free circulation and current. It is very seldom, too, that a story gains nothing in its course, and what was of pigmy birth grows quickly in its progress through any circle to gigantic stature. Were it truth only that is thus passed on from house to house, scandal would soon cease ; for truth, admitting of no variation in the nature of its circumstances, would not afford it sufficient nourishment.

Mrs. L.—I think I have remarked among those whom I could not charge with any decided propensity to blunder, extreme carelessness regarding the reputation of their acquaintance. I have heard them mention, with no spirit of unkindness, but from inconsideration, or from the love of talking, circumstances and reports resting on slight basis, and yet of such a nature as to convey very injurious impressions of the parties concerned. Is not such conduct highly censurable ?

Mrs. B.—Without doubt. In proportion to the desire we have to avert unjust reproach from ourselves, should

be our solicitude to avoid fixing it undeservedly upon another, particularly upon a woman, whose name, if once sullied, is so irrecoverably. Sometimes an injurious report is handed about, and after circulating and gaining credit a contradiction comes out, telling you that the whole is a calumny. But who will pretend to say that no mischief is done, and that the contradiction will extend as far as the story, or will gain as ready a belief? It may often happen, that upon such grounds an innocent woman for the rest of her days is regarded by her acquaintance with suspicion, and her society consequently avoided.

We are not, however, to confound scandal with just censure and discrimination. We may sometimes be called upon to express an opinion respecting the character and conduct of individuals, and if we feel assured that censure is deserved, we must not withhold it, lest we neglect the cause of morality. But in doing this, we may be careful not to exceed justice, nor to speak with more than requisite severity.

Mrs. L.—But as scandal is not confined to the weaker sex, how is a lady to discriminate the characters of the gentlemen who may visit at her house?

Mrs. B.—By their chosen pursuits, and by the tenour of their conversation, some knowledge may be attained of the character of those who form a part of our society. If they are known to discharge their various obligations honourably and judiciously; if they devote some portion of their time to the acquisition of knowledge; if their sentiments on all important subjects do not offend against morality; and if their conversation is free from levity and folly—there can be little doubt of their being entitled to a favourable reception in society. But when the chief study of men appears to be the fashions of the day, and their highest ambition is to be of *ton*; when they would rather relinquish right principles, and adopt any folly, than sin against the laws of fashion; when frivolity marks

their pursuits, and selfishness their conduct, you will be justified in excluding such from an intimate footing in your circle, although there may be circumstances which compel you to admit them among your acquaintance. A formal intercourse is all such men deserve, which, like the gauze curtains used in Indian climates to exclude annoying insects, will prevent their society from proving an inconvenience. But, unfortunately, fashion has more sway in the regulations of society than good taste and propriety; and in your intercourse with the world, you will often encounter the weakest and most worthless men, who are not only admitted, but even sought after and welcomed every where, because they are fashionable, and because their names, not their accomplishments, give *éclat* to the parties they frequent.

It has been a common reflection upon women, that they are ever ready to encourage all the derelictions from good taste and wisdom which fashion may prescribe, and to their influence, the folly and consequent insignificance in society of many a young man has been attributed. Certainly, if such folly were not supposed to be admired, and to gain distinction, it would have fewer votaries.

Mrs. L.—Let us hope for a brighter era in the history of society, when the improved taste of the female world will assert an influence in discountenancing eccentricity, affectation, and folly, by whatever name supported; and in ranking wisdom and virtue on the side of fashion.

Mrs. B.—On one point, however, we may in this age boast of improvement. The unmeaning compliments which were formerly paid to women, and considered as forming the only species of conversation that could be palatable to them, are now become unfashionable, and even absurd. Most women of the present day, were they so complimented, would probably suspect themselves to be objects of ridicule rather than of admiration. Yet although open and gross flattery can now seldom please, there are

kinds of a more specious and hidden form, which are too often acceptable. These are not unfrequently the instruments of designing characters, and employed under the semblance of friendship and esteem to gain confidence for some sinister end. Sometimes the ambition of a low mind is to rise into notice by mean subservience to a superior, and flattering his weaknesses to gain his point by making his patron his dupe. But the love of flattery, besides rendering us dupes of the most contemptible arts, is in itself injurious. The mind accustomed to adulation, is like the body when fed upon too high and luxurious an aliment. It becomes diseased, and cannot afterwards endure the plain language of sincerity. The true friend is often neglected, or coldly treated, and preference shown to any, however unworthy, who are willing to give, in sufficient quantity, the only food welcome to self-love. Mental infirmities receive no check from such nourishment: the taste and feelings become depraved, and added years, instead of witnessing improvement in character, only bring to light defects and failings cherished and multiplied under the baneful influence of flattery.

Women who are gossips, are generally flatterers. They discover the weak side of every one with whom they associate; and in administering incense to self-love, obtain the possession of secrets under the mask of confidence, which they are impatient to impart to the whole circle in which they move. Such women are dangerous in proportion as they are insinuating: like the Circean cup, their noxious qualities are not discovered until the poison has touched the vitals.

CONVERSATION IV.

CONDUCT TO RELATIONS ;—ADVICE FROM ; WHEN AND HOW TO BE RECEIVED ; WHEN TO BE REJECTED.—THE GOOD OPINION OF RELATIONS ESSENTIAL TO HAPPINESS.

Mrs. L.—The proper attention to be paid to the claims of relationship, presents a subject for consideration of great moment to the newly-married female : for peace and good will cannot be destroyed among relations without a serious interruption to happiness. A family feud is like an incurable wound. How is this to be avoided ?

Mrs. B.—The first year of a woman's married life is not always most free from vexations and troubles. She carries into one family the prejudices and the habits of another, which sometimes prove so different, as to cause the task of assimilating herself, in her new character, to those with whom she is henceforth to dwell, to be both painful and difficult. If she be solicitous to promote unanimity between her new connections and herself, she will, perhaps, examine, how far she can yield to their prejudices, and in what degree she ought to maintain her own. By yielding a little, she makes, at least, her road smoother, if she do not thereby lay the foundation of esteem and affection, not to be shaken for the future, by any trifling cause.

As the happiness of the husband is liable to interruption, and his temper to be tried, by the petty umbrages and irritations between his wife and his relations, it is her duty, and assuredly the best mode of securing her own happiness, to endeavour to please them, so as to engage their affections if possible. A determination to be pleased herself, is half-way towards pleasing them ; and this may be

shown by her willingness to discover their agreeable traits of character, rather than with the critical penetration of ill-humour, to mark their weaknesses and errors. By pleasing manners at first, she may secure herself a favourable reception into her husband's family; and, in time, when she has proved her worth, her footing among them will be on a surer foundation.

Mrs. L.—It happens not unfrequently, that a husband has kept house before his marriage, and has had his domestic affairs managed by a maiden sister; and circumstances may exist to render her continuance in the family requisite. How is the young married lady to act in such a case?

Mrs. B.—No situation in which a young married female can be placed, demands greater circumspection. In assuming the entire management of her household, which should be immediately done on entering into it, she must yield, at first, in many things, to the guidance of its former ruler; and even where reform is necessary, and her own opinion differs from that of her sister-in-law, the change must be effected by degrees, and with much delicacy. Her predecessor may look with a jealous eye upon all her transactions; and, unless she be a woman of more than common prudence and amiable dispositions, she will not fail to notice the failures, which she sees, or supposes she sees, in the management of the family. Every young mistress of a family should endeavour to act independently, by degrees; and as soon as this can be done, the less counsel she takes, and the more she treats her sister-in-law as a visiter only in the family, the greater will be the probability of preserving her esteem, and securing the general comfort of the household.

Mrs. L.—Suppose her predecessor to be the mother of her husband.

Mrs. B.—Still greater delicacy would then be requisite, in the attempt to obtain independence. The opinions

and feelings of the mother of her husband should not be treated either with indifference or contempt, though it might be necessary to make a firm, but a modest resistance to some of her prejudices and habits. Good sense and good temper united may effect wonders under the difficulties which may attend such an inmate ; and, indeed, under any circumstances, they are the only means by which a permanent state of order and comfort in a family can be established.

Mrs. L.—What influence should a lady allow her own relations to have in the regulation of her family affairs ? For instance ; it occasionally happens that a mother, or a sister, spends some months with a lady immediately after her marriage ; and it is next to impossible that they should avoid some interference in directing her plans, and in forming her arrangements.

Mrs. B.—Matrimonial uneasiness has, sometimes, been occasioned, by the undue influence maintained over the mind of the wife by the members of her own family. It would be unnatural, if they did not retain a part of the influence, which early habit has given ; but something materially wrong must exist, both in the wife, and in her relations, when this influence acts upon her, so as to induce her to oppose, in any way, the comfort of her husband. The parent, in giving away his daughter at the altar, yielded up his right of control over her, never to be exerted again in opposition to the husband, unless some point of peculiar importance to the welfare of both seem to demand it.

Mrs. L.—Suppose misunderstandings arise between a husband and his wife, for you know, my dear madam, such things do occur, can a woman be blamed for appealing to her own relations ?

Mrs. B.—Interference on the part of relations, in the case of matrimonial disputes, is extremely injudicious, the effect of such disputes, would frequently be but mo-

mentary and slight, if all interference were avoided. Indeed, it displays a deficiency of sense, and is a melancholy sacrifice of self-esteem, in a wife, to communicate to others the failings of her husband, or the subjects of their disagreement. It destroys the mutual trust which must exist, or the married state cannot be happy. Let, then, every woman beware, before she exposes her husband's failings; let her rather screen them from observation, with the same care with which she would wish her own to be veiled. If she does this, she may never have to complain of injudicious interference.

Mrs. L.—I have known instances of married ladies stating their grievances to their male friends. My opinion is, that such conduct is very reprehensible; but I am desirous of hearing from you, whose judgment is strengthened by experience, what may be expected to result from such imprudence?

Mrs. B.—A woman can scarcely commit an act of greater imprudence, than to impart to a friend of the other sex, the causes of uneasiness subsisting between her husband and herself. Such a confidence bestowed upon a man of unsteady principles, would expose her to inconveniences of a painful and degrading nature. It would, in fact, be a tacit avowal of needing that protection, which she ought alone to receive from the very individual against whom she has lodged her appeal; and thus she would herself open the way to attentions and advances, dishonourable to the purity of her mind, and dangerous to her character. When ignorance of the world, or a weak understanding tempts a woman to such imprudent conduct, it will be next to a miracle if her downfall be not the result.

Mrs. L.—Under what circumstances is advice to be taken and to be requested?

Mrs. B.—The elder members of families are often disposed to fancy their juniors incapable of judging and

acting for themselves ; and, thence, urgently press their opinions and advice, upon all occasions, whether of importance or of insignificance ; thus disgusting where they wished to benefit.

The young, on their part, are generally too presumptuous, and averse from counsel, which may not, in their opinion, be sufficiently flavoured by the fashions of the day. Did they consider that the practice and opinions of their seniors have borne the test of experience, while those of the present time have their value still to be proved, they would, perhaps, be more willing to pay the proper tribute of respect and attention to the advice that may be given to them ; and by this they might sometimes be spared the purchase of experience at too dear a rate.

It is not, however, judicious to seek advice on every occasion, or to act upon it indiscriminately. This would show a weak character, or tend to produce one. A proper dependence on self, is essential to right conduct, and where it is wanting, neither oral nor written advice can supply the deficiency.

There are, however, many points, on which a young married woman finds that her judgment needs the aid of experience ; and this will induce her to ask for advice, from the best source within her power. If very strict regard to economy be important, the experience of a friend may enable her to put it into immediate practice : in affairs of the nursery, timely advice may prevent some of the grievous effects of ignorance ; and in the government of servants too, it may often be useful, and avert much inconvenience ; for, to be ignorant in the eyes of our domestics, is to place ourselves in their power, the effect of which is shown by their disobedience and contempt. But on this subject, we will speak more fully hereafter. On other things, speaking generally, it will be better to consult the judgment, and to act according to its dictates, than in every moment of demur, to seek the

opinion of another. Errors of judgment may be the consequence occasionally, but with ripened years they will diminish ; and the character will acquire vigour by the exercise of the judgment, sufficient to compensate for a few mistakes. At the commencement of any new career, the experience of our friends is most advantageous, but it should be regarded merely as a temporary assistance ; like that afforded to the child when he first attempts to walk. The support should be diminished by degrees, as strength and courage increase, till at length we may be left to our own pilotage and freedom of action.

A multiplicity of advisers is very far from desirable. It is true, there may be wisdom in the counsel of the many, yet, in most cases, I would rather have the opinion of one sensible friend than that of many others. To have to select from an incongruous mass of advice that which may appear to be the best, sometimes rather impedes than assists the judgment ; and besides this, the liberty of choosing is restrained by the fear of offending, and, it must be confessed, not without reason, for very few people feel perfectly complacent towards those who have disregarded their counsel or preferred that of another.

Mrs. L.—There is not, I think, any one more troublesome than the voluntary adviser. I mean one who, on all petty matters, is in the habit of pointing out to you much better plans than those you have pursued, and who makes you readily aware that she is sure she could arrange all your family affairs much more advantageously than you can yourself. I have seen much vexation arise from this foible. How may it be parried without giving offence ?

Mrs. B.—It may be difficult to resist such a friendly adviser with discretion, particularly if she be nearly related or connected. But that it must be done there can be no hesitation, or you may not be long the mistress of your house or of your actions. Such a case will require firm, but not violent, opposition, and it is probable that one or

two struggles will be sufficient to check the habit, as far as you are concerned ; and if on all other points you continue to manifest the kindness and regard you had previously shown, perhaps even redouble your attention, you may possibly avoid incurring any continued resentment or displeasure.

MRS. L.—Is it not improper to mention the occurrences in one's family to strangers, unless advice be the object ?

MRS. B.—Certainly ; nothing can be more ill advised. The daily trifling occurrences in a family should never be known beyond the walls of the house. It is extremely injudicious to repeat them ; and even if they be told to relations and intimates, they frequently cause discussions of an unsatisfactory nature, or entail a load of advice, which proves neither useful nor agreeable. Greater events, either of pleasure or of sorrow, our friends have a just claim to know, and on such occasions their sympathy gratifies and comforts.

MRS. L.—What general line of conduct should a woman adopt in reference to her husband's relations ?

MRS. B.—If a woman endeavour to place her husband's relations on the same footing, as nearly as possible, as her own ; to search for their virtues, and to pay those virtues the meed of esteem ; to be more than half-blind to their weaknesses ; to respect the opinions and feelings of the senior members of his family, while she treats the younger with affection and good-humour, she cannot fail to ensure towards herself a conduct in some degree correspondent. Her husband, too, will be gratified by the attainment of this family concord, especially if his wife have conceded some of her prejudices and habits to promote it. And if he be not a selfish character, he will neglect no opportunity of establishing it on the firmest foundation.

The task of conciliating a variety of tempers, and of assimilating ourselves to habits and modes of thinking to

which we have not been accustomed, forms, sometimes, a perplexing and trying part of the duty of married life ; but they who habitually sacrifice inclination to the sense of duty, will find even this easy and tolerable. As a compensation, they will experience self-approbation, a reward of far higher value than inclination, when gratified at the expense of duty, can ever purchase.

CONVERSATION V.

ON TEMPER, AS CONNECTED WITH SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS
TOWARDS A HUSBAND, CHILDREN, SERVANTS, AND SOCIETY.

Mrs. L.—It requires but little penetration, and even less experience, to acknowledge the importance of a good temper in the married woman ; but who can advise her how to attain it ? We can all eulogize it ; but if nature have not laid its foundation within us, we find advice but an inefficient instructor in the art of raising its superstructure. Will you, my dear madam, give me your opinion, and afford me such assistance as the nature of the subject will permit ?

Mrs. B.—A good temper is indeed a blessing, not only to the individual who possesses it, but to every being and object within its influence. It is like a healthy atmosphere :—it promotes cheerfulness and elasticity of spirits in all around ; and even gloomy and discontented dispositions can scarcely resist its happy power. But the temper which casts this influence around it, is not to be confounded with that easy disposition which nature sometimes gives, and in which no feeling, either pleasurable or

painful, proceeds beyond the point of mediocrity. Such a disposition may pass by painful and vexatious events without annoying us by fretful lamentations, but it does no more ; it neither heightens our pleasures nor lessens our griefs by its sympathy. It sheds no cheerfulness around it, and is hardly to be considered as a blessing to the possessor, since it weakens the social feelings which connect him with his fellow-creatures. The temper I would recommend is to be acquired by the aid of self-government, and to be possessed by every one, although perhaps in different degrees.

Mrs. L.—But should not the task of regulating the temper begin long before the responsibility of a wife or a mother commences ? Will not the difficulty then prove too great, for those whose tempers have been injured, either by the false indulgence of their parents, or by other defects in their early management ?

Mrs. B.—In such cases the difficulties are indeed great, but where there is energy of mind, much may be done, especially if there be, also, a thorough conviction of the importance of self-control, both as it regards the happiness of the individual, and of every one connected with her. Upon her temper, the welfare of her family may be said to turn, because it has the greatest effect in moulding the characters, and in promoting or destroying the happiness of the domestic circle. Even should the temper of her husband be peculiar, she may, by having the command of her own, lessen some of its bad effects upon the happiness of the family ; and though she may not be able to avert them entirely, yet she will derive much satisfaction from knowing she has not increased the evil, by her own want of forbearance and good-humour. One of the agreeable consequences which she will find to result from good temper, is the influence it gives her within the domestic sphere. It is a virtuous influence, honourable to herself, and beneficial as far as it extends ; and very different from that love

of power, which, the sarcastic say, is inherent in woman. Good temper in a wife is indispensable to conjugal happiness. A man may possess every advantage which the world has to give, and may have talents that render him a valuable member of society ; yet, if his wife be contentious, fretful, or discontented, his sum of happiness is most incomplete.

Every man, whether employed in the duties of public or of professional life, meets with numerous circumstances and disappointments which harass and distress him. For the painful effects of these, a happy home provides an instantaneous antidote. Every thing beyond its walls seems for a time forgotten, while the mind is relieved, and its powers renovated for future exertions in the world, by the healthy air of cheerfulness which he breathes in the domestic circle. How different when home is a scene of ill humour and discord ! Into such a home no one can retire from the harassing business of life, with any hope of comfort and relaxation, but must seek elsewhere to dissipate the weight upon his spirits ; though nowhere can he find relief so effectual, as that which, under happier auspices, his home might have afforded him. The desires which he might once have entertained to cultivate domestic tastes, and to seek for happiness in domestic enjoyments, are turned from their course, and directed into channels which can give him no permanent satisfaction, but in which, by too eager a pursuit, he may be brought into situations destructive to his peace of mind.

The world corrupts ; home should refine : the one, even in the sober transactions of life, presents examples of craftiness, self-interestedness, and freedom in moral principle ; while, in its more alluring scenes of pleasure, it only nourishes folly and vanity. By the contemplation of these, even without participating in them, the mind is injured ; it contracts a rust which nothing can better remove than home, when it is properly organized. When that presents

an opposite picture of virtue, innocence, and peace, none but a depraved mind can withstand its influence, which tends to purify the heart, and to restore to the mind its moral lustre. How important then is it, that the wife should obtain that influence over her husband's mind which will prompt him to turn frequently from the world to her society, for happiness and refinement!

Mrs. L.—You will tell me that the welfare of children is also as deeply involved in the temper of their mother. But you do not expect that she can always maintain it in one even tenor, when assailed by vexatious and irritating circumstances?

Mrs. B.—It is not, indeed, always possible to preserve good-humour and composure, under the various attacks made upon them; but a mother must be defective in the management of her children, if she be herself ruled by the impulse of the moment. No precept to restrain their passions can work with effect, if her example teach them a contrary lesson. Fear may restrain them in her presence, but its effects will extend no farther; and when away from her, their waywardness will be without control. Duplicity is sometimes engendered by fear, in children of timid dispositions; and the parent who, in giving way to the impulses of her temper, renders her children afraid of her, must not be surprised if they practise towards her all the petty arts of subterfuge they can devise in order to conceal from her causes which might excite her anger. Thus a vice may be implanted in their minds which she may never have the power to eradicate. Had she disciplined herself better, she might, instead of governing them by fear, and urging them to take refuge from her displeasure in craftiness, have established their confidence in her, and encouraged in them a candid spirit. Restraining herself in all but just displeasure, she might have induced them to found their strength and security on her approbation, rather than in the concealment of their childish

misdemeanours. Her influence over them would then have tended to remedy the weakness in their characters; until they, by the force of habit, had become incapable of practising any course of systematic deception.

Mrs. L.—I have witnessed the effects you describe upon a family of young people, in whom fear towards their parents predominated over affection. While very young, I saw them endeavouring daily to avoid anger or disgrace, by every art of evasion and deceit in their power: at last they became such proficient, that it might have been said of them, as was observed of one of our great poets, that “he could scarcely drink tea without a stratagem.” Circumstances broke off the intimacy that had subsisted between this family and my father’s; and it was fortunate for me that my intercourse with them thus terminated, although it was not until I had been disgusted with the system which pervaded the whole family. I have since heard that not one of the young people have turned out well. One of the daughters eloped from the paternal roof, and made a disgraceful marriage; and the sons, whom I have heard described as spirited young men, have not continued to brook its restraints. They have broken through them, and have run riot almost to their ruin. But let us turn from this disagreeable episode, as soon as you have told how such evils may be avoided.

Mrs. B.—Uniform but gentle restraint may generally prevent the vices of childhood from gaining ground. I cannot but be of opinion, that when deceit and disobedience have attained strength in the infant mind, it must be attributable either to the neglect or the abuse of parental power. By proper care their growth may generally be checked, and the opposite virtues encouraged. And this may be done without any severe measures, or any diminution of the happiness which nature has allotted to that season of life. No one, who has witnessed the ill-humour and caprice of a petted child, will declare that its happi-

ness is comparable to that of the little cheerful being whose will is governed by the superior judgment of its parents. But this subject is worthy of much more consideration than a conversation between you and myself will permit. Therefore we will close it with observing, that she who desires to govern her children judiciously, must commence her task by governing herself.

Mrs. L.—But before you leave me, I should like to hear you discuss another branch of domestic management, though one of minor importance. Many satisfy themselves that the restraint of their tempers towards their domestics is not requisite, if they set them an example in observance of all the forms of religion, and of avoidance of any acts of immorality; but I do not imagine that you will allow such latitude.

Mrs. B.—Indeed, example is of the greatest importance to our servants, particularly those who are young, whose habits are frequently formed by the first service they enter. With the mild and good, they become softened and improved; but with the dissipated and violent, are too often disorderly and vicious. It is, therefore, not among the least of the duties incumbent on the heads of families, to place in their view such examples as are worthy their imitation. But these examples, otherwise praiseworthy, should neither be rendered disagreeable, nor have their force diminished by any accompaniment of ill-humour. Rather, by the happiness and comfort resulting from our conduct towards our domestics, should they be made sensible of the beauty of virtue and piety. What we admire, we often strive to imitate; and thus they might be led on to imbibe good principles, and to form regular and virtuous habits.

It is not within the domestic circle only that good temper should be exercised; it is an invaluable possession even among the more distant connections of social life. It is a passport with all into their esteem and affection. It gives

a grace to the plainest countenance, and to the fairest is an ornament which neither time nor disease will destroy. Every day of life teems with circumstances by which it may be exercised and improved. Towards the husband, it is manifested by forbearance, when he is irritated and vexed; and by soothing, comforting, and supporting him, when under the pressure of deeper and more afflicting troubles. It is shown towards children and servants, by willingness to promote their enjoyments, while superiority is mildly but steadily exerted, to keep them in proper subjection. It is exhibited in every direction, by unwillingness to offend; by not opposing our own opinions and pleasures to the prejudices of others; and it is above all demonstrated by the cheerful even tenor of spirits that dwells within the well-governed mind, and which renders it happy almost in spite of vexations and sorrows.

CONVERSATION VI.

**FORMS OF VISITING.—MORNING CALLS.—DINNER PARTIES.
—EVENING PARTIES.**

Mrs. L.—Having satisfied me with regard to some important points of conduct, allow me, my dear madam, to consult your experience respecting those minor circumstances, connected with society and domestic economy, to which newly-married ladies are frequently strangers. It is too much the fashion to confine the attention of juvenile females to the acquisition of those accomplishments which may adorn them for the drawing-room, while they neglect to attain useful knowledge until they require it for immediate practice. Of the number of these young

women, I must unhappily count myself ; though perhaps more fortunate than many others, in having so kind and experienced a friend as yourself at hand, with whom I can hold such agreeable consultations. In the first place, I wish to know, the forms to be observed in morning visiting ; in what manner, and at what time, I am to return the attentions of those whose cards are spread upon my table. Some of them, I perceive, have been left by persons whom I very highly esteem ; others, by individuals with whom I am unacquainted ; and some, even by those with whom I have no desire to be intimate.

Mrs. B.—A newly-married woman, on arriving at her future home, will have to send her cards in return for those which are left at her house, after her marriage. She may afterwards expect the calls of her acquaintance ; for which it is not absolutely necessary to remain at home, although politeness requires that they should be returned as soon as possible. But having performed this, any further intercourse may be avoided (where it is deemed necessary) by a polite refusal of invitations. Where cards are to be left, the number must be determined according to the various members of which the family called upon is composed. For instance, where there are the mother, aunt, and daughters (the latter having been introduced to society), three cards should be left.

Morning visits should not be long. In this species of intercourse, the manners should be easy and cheerful, and the subjects of conversation such as may be easily terminated. The time proper for such visits is too short to admit of serious discussions and arguments. The conduct of others often, at these times, becomes the subject of remark ; but it is dangerous and improper to express opinions of persons and characters upon a recent acquaintance ; and a young married female would do wisely, to sound the opinions and to examine for herself the characters of a new circle of acquaintance, before exposing her own

sentiments. I do not mean that she should be afraid of broaching them, but that she should avoid the possibility of unknowingly giving pain and offence. When she is better acquainted with the circle of which she has become a member, she will see more clearly around her; and then, as she thinks fit, she may diminish her caution. Friendships are acquired and secured by qualities of intrinsic value; but among mere acquaintance, it is by pleasing manners chiefly that we must expect to obtain a favourable reception. The deportment of a bride, in particular, is so far important to herself, that it may decide in a degree her future estimation in society.

Mrs. L.—I have often thought that morning visits are very annoying, both to receive and to pay. They fritter away so much time, without affording any adequate return; unless, indeed, any thing be gained by hearing the little *nothings* of the day enlarged upon, and perhaps of acquiring one's self the art of discussing them as if they were matters of deep importance.

Mrs. B.—And yet, when it is desirable to keep together a large circle of acquaintance, morning visits cannot very well be dispensed with. You must be aware that as time and circumstances seldom permit the frequent interchange of other visits, our acquaintance would become estranged from us, if our intercourse with them were not occasionally renewed by receiving and paying morning visits. A good economist of time will, of course, keep morning visits strictly for this purpose; and, not considering them as intended merely for amusement, will not make them more frequently than is necessary. By the occasional appropriation of a few hours, many debts of this kind may be paid off at once, and thus a season for other pursuits will be provided. The economy of time, so essential to the head of a family, will also prompt certain limitations as to the times of receiving morning visits. To have every morning liable to such interruptions, must be a

great impediment in the way of more important avocations, and must occasion the useless dissipation of many an hour. Experience has found this out, or the custom of denial would not have become so prevalent.

Mrs. L.—What is your opinion of denials?

Mrs. B.—Something may be said on both sides of the question respecting the propriety of this custom. As the words "*not at home*" have become synonymous with "*being engaged*," they neither deceive, nor are intended to deceive; therefore they may be employed innocently, as far as regards our friends and ourselves;* but I am not quite so well satisfied as to the effect upon our domestics, whom in the morning we may desire to utter a deliberate falsehood (according to their apprehension) for our convenience, and whom in the evening we may find occasion to reprimand for one employed in their own service. How can we expect ignorant servants to discriminate between the falsehood which the use of the phrase "*not at home*" in its literal meaning conveys, when it is employed to forbid the intrusion of a visiter at an unseasonable moment, and the meaning which fashion and custom have now attached to it? I am afraid their integrity is weakened by its use; and the habit once begun in the practice of deceit, no one can tell to what greater magnitude it may proceed. Deceit is a growing evil. To say to it "*so far shalt thou go, and no farther*," would prove as ineffectual as the Danish monarch's prohibition to the ocean. Yet

* Custom may have rendered this fashionable, but it is radically wrong, and tends to undo all the good principles endeavoured to be inculcated in the succeeding pages of this work. A wilful, known and downright lie cannot be advocated upon principles of honour or morality, and ought to be religiously discarded. Making the words *not at home*, synonymous with *being engaged*, is a gross perversion of language, and can only be made so, by a mental reservation of the person who returns such a message, which is not believed by the one who receives it. It were better to tell the plain truth than a lie, and to reply to a morning call, *that you are so engaged as to wish to be excused from being seen*. This might affront some, but not so many as the other method, and the truth would be maintained without injury to any one. *Amer. Ed.*

we are told this custom is without remedy. Let us examine this point.

What has given it its present general currency? What commences and establishes many customs in polite society? The answer is easy—the caprice or will of some leading personage, who has the power of acting independently of public opinion, together with the influence of fashion in leading those who strive, by following the example of their superiors, to include themselves within the sphere of polite life, without examining either the morality or the propriety of the act as it may affect themselves. The most absurd fashions have occasionally prevailed; deformities of which nature was never guilty have been esteemed elegancies in shape; and even diseases have had their seasons of admiration, as characteristics of fashion! Sparkling eyes, that might have vied with the eagle in strength of vision, have been seen straining through a glass; and limbs agile and strong have appeared feeble and decrepit by the irresistible mandate of fashion! Let any woman possessing the needful qualifications for leading the *ton*,—beauty, rank, and fortune,—decorate her person in the most preposterous and unbecoming mode which she can devise, she will still have her imitators, amidst the throng of inferior beauties, emulous to vie with her in absurdity. If fashion be thus powerful,—if by her magic touch she can give attractions to deformity, disease, and folly,—where can be the impossibility, but that one day truth and sincerity may be her characteristics and her tests?

I would not by these remarks urge a young married woman to become a Quixote in morals, and declare war against custom; but her aim should be to obviate the evil that may arise from it as much as she can. She may endeavour to acquaint her servants with the real state of the case; and explain to them the impossibility of adopting plainer or more direct language in the present state of society.—My memory presents an instance to me of the

futile attempt Candida made to oppose her practice to this custom. Prior to her marriage she had lived in the country, and her education had been favourable to the extreme artlessness of her character, so that when she came to act in a more extended sphere, she shrunk abhorrent from the dissimulation which she saw practised and enforced. Soon after her arrival in the capital, where she was destined to mingle with the fashionable world, she found that the daily intrusion of the idle and the thoughtless so completely destroyed her mornings, which she had been accustomed to devote to reading, drawing, and other studies, that she resolved to see no visitors until after a certain hour in the day; and desired her footman to inform those who might call before that time, that she was engaged, and begged to be excused. She soon found the inconvenience of acting with such candour: her insolence and ill-breeding were loudly condemned; and when she encountered her acquaintance, she perceived their manner to her to be cold and haughty. This trifling instance thus proved to her that her comfort would be disturbed if she did not float with the tide of custom; and she resolved, while striving to act well in important concerns, to attempt no innovations in the ordinary usages of society.

Mrs. L.—I perceive what you wish to enforce. Innovations of custom must not be attempted by those in ordinary life; for such an attempt would prove ineffectual, as far as regards the good of society, and be injurious in respect to themselves. Such attempts should proceed only from those of exalted rank, and of peculiar influence; and even in them it would, I think, require more courage and indifference to general opinion than can be desirable in the female character. But will you continue your remarks on the power this custom gives us to restrict the number of morning visitors?

Mrs. B.—This custom cannot be better enforced than towards the idlers of both sexes. If they choose to fritter

away their time, they have no right to condemn others to do so too, who may have better notions of the value of existence, and of such pursuits as leave them no time to kill. The gay and fashionable idlers of the other sex, in particular, should, without mercy, be doomed to the restrictions of formal visiting alone; and this is the more desirable when the husband of a young lady is generally absent from home in a morning, because it has lately become fashionable to pay more attention, and to show more undisguised admiration, to young married females (provided they be agreeable) than to the single. The greater intercourse for the few last years with foreigners, and the imitation of their manners, which allow of gallantry to married women alone, may be one cause of this change in English manners. Or it may partly arise from the forwardness of young ladies to be married, and the too evident desire of many mothers to establish their daughters early in life; such views, disgusting instead of pleasing, often destroy their hopes and defeat their purpose. But to be the object of gallantry can seldom be either agreeable or flattering to a woman of sense: where superiority ought at once to secure her from any attentions inconsistent with the esteem which that superiority claims.

Mrs. L.—The young and lively may be led, almost unknowingly, into improprieties of conduct; for I am very much inclined to believe, that ignorance and want of reflection are the first causes of error in our sex.

But to return to minor considerations.—I think I have perceived some care shown in the arrangement of the drawing-room, when visitors were expected. Is this necessary?

Mrs. B.—Morning visitors are generally received in the drawing-room. To preserve this apartment neat, and to exhibit good taste in its decorations and the arrangements of its furniture, are of some importance to the young mistress of a family. From these, strangers are apt to form

an opinion of the character of its proprietor. The drawing-room is that part of a private house in which decorations and embellishments are most in place. It is there the graces of social intercourse are chiefly displayed; where learning relaxes from his gravity of feature; p-dantry throws aside his gown and trencher; and wisdom, with the affability of benevolence, mingles in the amusements, and shares the feelings of the young, the gay, and the lovely. Every thing, therefore, in the drawing-room should be light and elegant. mirrors are here in character; and bouquets and flowering plants. The drawing-rooms of the opulent and fashionable have of late been crowded with a thousand fanciful ornaments; such as various articles of old and foreign china, glass baskets, Spanish toys, flowers made of rice and wax, and many other trifles. This fashion is of French origin, and cannot be considered as entirely consistent with good taste. It is, indeed, converting the drawing-room into a bazaar or toy-shop; but is still more absurd when it is adopted by those who can ill afford to purchase such frivolities. A more rational source of amusement both for the visitants and inmates of the drawing-room may be derived from selections of the literature of the day, or from the works of some of our best authors. This selection should not include productions of an immoral tendency, or those which offend against propriety. Of this description are the *Don Juan*, and other poems by Lord Byron, and the works of Smollett and Fielding. Although these authors rank high among us, their works must be regarded as unfit for general perusal, because they introduce the reader to characters which had better remain unknown; and they unveil scenes it were better to conceal. If the artist, who aspires to a correct and pure taste, avoids the study of works of a low and groveling style, so should they who do not desire to debase their minds, shun familiarity with vice, whether in scenes of real life, or in the representations of fiction.

In the arrangement of the drawing-room for receiving morning visitors, the couches, sofettes, and chairs should be placed so as to facilitate the colloquial intercourse of the strangers, without the necessity of a servant entering the room to place them ; and this arrangement, while it is devoid of formality, should be done with some attention to good order. Ease, not carelessness, should predominate.

Plants and flowers are pleasing ornaments in a drawing-room, and give an exercise for taste in their choice and arrangement. And let me observe, that, though it may not be necessary for a lady to be a botanist or a naturalist, yet she ought not to be ignorant of the names and characters of the flowers that adorn her drawing-room. To learn their names, something of their natural history, and (if they are exotics) of their native soil, is soon done, and such slight knowledge often promotes conversation between those who, from slight acquaintance, have with each other few subjects in common, and between whom, conversation, in consequence, flags, and becomes heavy.

It is almost unnecessary to add, that the occupations of drawing, music, and reading, should be suspended on the entrance of morning visitors. But if a lady be engaged with light needlework, and none other is appropriate in the drawing-room, it promotes ease, and is not inconsistent with good breeding to continue it during conversation ; particularly if the visit be protracted or the visitors be gentlemen. It was formerly the custom to see visitors to the door on taking leave ; but this is now discontinued. The lady of the house merely rises from her seat, shakes hands or courtesies, according as her intimacy is with the parties, and then ringing the bell to summon a servant to attend them, leaves them to find their way out of the house. Neither is it necessary for a lady to advance to the door to receive her company, who are expected to make their way to her, unless, indeed, great age, or marked

superiority of rank require, according to the usages of society, a greater degree of attention.

Mrs. L.—Is there not some awkwardness attending this, if servants be not on the alert?

Mrs. B.—There is; but it is the duty of every mistress, to see that her servants understand, and fulfil, what is requisite for the good order of her house, and the comfort of her visitors.

§ 2. DINNER PARTIES.

Mrs. L.—How are dinner parties to be managed?

Mrs. B.—Cards for a dinner party should be issued a fortnight, three weeks, or even a month beforehand; and as dulness is less tolerable at one's own table than at any other, care should be taken in the selection of the party, which cannot be otherwise than heavy and dull, if incongruously assembled. A very large party is not likely to be as lively and sociable as one of moderate size. A remark has somewhere been made, that a dinner party should never be less in number than the graces, nor more than the muses; but certainly more than ten or twelve in number is not desirable. When a table is very long, the conversation, witticisms, and pleasantries at one end must be lost at the other. When, however, from prudential motives, it is an object to have a restricted number of dinner parties, they cannot, of course, be of so limited a size: it being settled by all strict economists, that the expense of dinner parties is in proportion to the number given, and not to the size of them.

The extent of a party being determined, the next point to be considered, is the selection of the guests. It is fatal to good humour and enjoyment, to invite those to meet who are known to be disagreeable to each other. The lively and reserved should be mixed together, so as to form an agreeable whole, the one amusing, and the other being

amused. An equal number of ladies and gentlemen, neither all old, nor yet all young, should be so mingled, that the conversation may be as varied as the party, uniting the sense and experience of age, with the vivacity and originality of youth. The conversation must, in a great degree, however, be regulated by the host and hostess; who should be always prepared to rouse it when it becomes heavy, or to change it skilfully when it is likely to turn upon subjects known to be unpleasant to any of their visitors. Such a power over the flow of conversation results generally from early and constantly associating with good company, and from that self-possession which rarely belongs to persons of retired habits. I have been told that Sir Walter Scott possesses this art in a peculiar degree, and exerts it whenever the conversation at his table approaches towards an argument between two of the party. By imperceptible, but sure means, he checks this monopoly, and turns the conversation into channels of more general interest.

Mrs. L.—When the party is formed, how is the table to be regulated?

Mrs. B.—The regulation of the table is a concern of some nicety; and in this every lady must first exercise her judgment as to its expense, and then show her taste in its arrangement, whatever her establishment may be: whether she have to fix upon her bill of fare with a house-keeper, or with a cook of fewer qualifications, her superintendence will still be necessary. She should be the best judge what dishes may be too expensive, too heavy, or too unsubstantial. In general, preserves form a part of a dessert, either West Indian or English; and when the latter are made at home, they are usually better in quality, and one half cheaper, than those purchased at the confectioner's.

Mrs. L.—Will you give me some idea of the best method of setting out and arranging a dinner table, for a party of sixteen or twenty?

Mrs. B.—Fashion, the great arbiter of every thing connected with social life, varies the nature of the courses, and the quantity of viands which must be placed at one time upon the table; so that the dinner which might be considered as elegant at one time would have an air of vulgarity at another; particular directions, therefore, on this part of your inquiry, can scarcely be given, though by describing a dinner of three courses, for the present time, some idea may be formed, and which may be modified to any future change of fashion.

The centre of the table is not now universally occupied by the *œrgne*, or any other centre dish, although at some tables this custom is continued. Nor, unless the party is a large one, is it as usual as it was to have two dishes of fish, and two tureens of soup. One of each, for a party of nine or ten is thought enough; the soup is placed at the top of the table, the fish at the bottom. Sometimes the side dishes, or *entrées*, are served with the soup and fish; but more commonly they are brought to table with the removes of the soup and fish. The number of these side dishes is four or six, according to the size of the party.

Vegetables are handed round from the side-table. The wines are placed upon the table at first in six decanters, one of each being placed at each corner of the table, and one on each side in the length of the table, while two bottles of some light French or Rhenish wine, undecanted, corked, and placed in silver or plated vases, fill up a space between the ends of the table. Small decanters of water, covered with an inverted tumbler, should be placed by the cover of every second guest, but malt liquors, cider, and other beverages, are handed by the attendants when called for. In the interval of each course, Champaign, Hock, Burgundy, or Barsac, are handed round to each guest. Cheese is handed round, but the custom of drinking Port after it is no longer in vogue.

When, according to the continental fashion, the cloth is allowed to remain on the table, it is protected by four small damask cloths, of which the corners meet in the centre of the table, and these are easily removed after the dinner is finished, and before the dessert is brought; but the more general custom is to remove the cloth before the dessert. Previously, however, a silver, china, or glass dish, containing rose-water, is passed round the table, into which each guest dips the corner of his table-napkin, for the purpose of refreshing his mouth and fingers, prior to the appearance of the dessert.

The dessert necessarily varies with the season: when that will admit of ripe fruits, the most important, such as grapes, pine-apples, peaches, or apricots, must of course occupy the ends of the table; while the inferior fruits, such as strawberries and raspberries, with preserves and dried fruits, fill the corners and sides of the table. A Savoy cake, on an elevated dish, is very proper for the centre; wafers, and any other cakes, may fill up any spaces in the length of the table. In the summer a China pail of ice is generally placed at each end of the table, and served out on glass plates before the wine is circulated. Sometimes Noyeau, Curaçoa, Dantzic, Constantia, or some other liqueur, or cordial, is handed to the guests in small glasses, immediately after the ice has been served; the ice pails and glass plates are removed before the servants leave the room.

The decanted wines placed on the table during dinner are white wines; either Madeira, Sherry, or Buçellus; those circulated after dinner are Port, Madeira, and Claret. Claret is generally contained in a decanter with a handle, and of a peculiar form, and having a heavy stopper.

Directions to the cook should always be closed with strict injunctions to be punctual to time, and to send every thing, which is intended to be eaten hot, to table in proper

season. Carelessness in these two particulars should not be passed over without reprimand; and if the fault be repeated, it might be as well to part with a servant who has either undertaken a place without possessing for it sufficient qualifications, or who is indifferent to the comfort of her master or mistress, to whom it is a most disagreeable circumstance to be anticipating for a length of time the announcement of dinner, and when announced to find every thing either chilled or overdone.

After the order for dinner has been given, a proper time should be allowed for serving it up, before the host or hostess express their impatience by ringing the bell; which often hurries and perplexes the servants without expediting their business. It has been calculated that it requires twenty minutes to serve up a dinner; but I believe that this calculation was made when the first course consisted of more dishes than is usually the case now. Perhaps, ten or twelve minutes is a sufficient allowance, especially if the cook has placed every thing in readiness for serving, and has proper assistance; it is impossible for one person to take up a large dinner in moderate time.

The butler, or footman, should be furnished with a plan of the dinner, drawn out in an intelligible manner, so that he may know how to arrange the dishes on the table: for as much of the elegance of effect, which is always desirable on a dinner table, is produced by this arrangement, it ought not to be trusted to the taste or judgment of a servant.

After the dessert is put on the table with the wine, glasses, &c. ice is sometimes handed round, for which there is an additional plate given to each guest. The butler and another servant remain in the room while the ice is eating, to remove the upper plates when done with. The butler and footman should have every thing in the neatest order, at the side-board and on the table; with a sufficient quantity of glasses, knives, forks, spoons, &c. in

the room. They should be quiet and rapid in their movements; observant in supplying changes of plates, and in attending to the demands of each guest. They ought not to require being told to change plates, nor should they be permitted to leave the room. The courses should be quickly removed, but without bustle.

It is always proper, if no housekeeper or butler be kept, that the mistress of her family should give very minute directions to the footman, to prepare the plate the day before a dinner-party is to be given. Wax lights should be in readiness, and the lamps, particularly those not in common use, should be cleaned and trimmed.

The table which is to be used must be so proportioned to the size of the party, as neither to inconvenience the guests, by over-crowding them, nor yet to admit of too much space, which has always an uncomfortable appearance. The glasses of every description should look clean and bright; and the water in the decanters should be clear, and without sediment. The wines, when not in charge of a butler, should be given out in good time, to be properly decanted and cooled.

I am afraid you will think that these directions are more minute than is requisite; but I know that many a young housekeeper has been amazed at the bustle and confusion apparent among her servants at the hour of dinner, and has been mortified at the difficulty of procuring what was required, without being aware, that, had she previously enforced regulations like these, she would have brought them into such habits of order and method, as would have enabled them to discharge their duties easily and quietly. When once good habits are formed in our servants, they will seldom require such minute attention; for, perceiving the advantages they themselves derive from them, they will generally continue to practise them. Such servants will, of their own accord, clean and put away into their proper places, all the various articles which belong to their

different departments. Confusion and breakage will be thus avoided, and the ordinary business of the following day not much interrupted.

Mrs. L.—Your instructions bring to my recollection the lively and amusing description of a badly-arranged and badly-conducted dinner in one of Miss Edgeworth's stories. Though the scene of that dinner is Dublin, it is not difficult to call to mind some very similar to it in England. The table groaning under the weight of luxuries; the domestics hurried and flurried, first at one end of the room; and then at another, without having much notion what to do with themselves; the lady hostess, with settled anxiety on her brow, directing the proper position of each dish, and apparently more solicitous for the perfection of the *coup-de'œil* of her table, than for the flavour of her viands; and when, after calling, commanding, and exhorting in vain the poor servant to put into its proper place either the trifle or the custard, her emphatic and reproachful exclamation admirably closes the scene, "*Oh! Larry! Larry!*"

But when dinner is announced, what form then takes place?

Mrs. B.—When dinner is announced, the gentleman of the house selects the lady either distinguished by rank, by age, or by being the greatest stranger in the party, to lead to the dining-room, where he places her by himself. If her husband be of the party, he takes the lady of the house to her place at table, and seats himself by her; the rest of the party follow in couples; and the hostess arranges them according to their rank, or according to what she imagines may be their expectations; always, however, placing the greatest strangers among the gentlemen near herself. This arrangement should be effected in an easy, gentle manner, and with as little form as possible.

The trouble of carving generally devolves on the gentleman next to the lady. The gentlemen around the table are supposed to pay every attention to the ladies next to

them ; and it is the duty of the servants to hand round the fish and soup, which are presumed to be generally eaten. It is not, now, the fashion for the presiding lady to pay those very particular attentions to her guests, which formerly was a formidable task. In this point, however, some discrimination must be shown ; too much attention has the appearance of effort, and annoys ; too little may offend. The lady of the house should never be so much engaged with these attentions as to render her unable to listen to conversation, or to keep it alive : her aim should be to give it an easy transition from one topic to another ; and to guard it from dwelling long on one which is not likely to excite general interest. In fact, a gentlewoman is known in her own house. She may pass unnoticed elsewhere, because there may be nothing striking in her appearance ; but at home, and at her own table, she is instantly discovered. It is with her manners as with her dress ; she does not follow fashion blindly and immoderately, but rather moulds them into the superior form of good breeding.

It is customary in some houses, which are regarded as fashionable, for the master and mistress to sit together at the head of the table, leaving the lower end in charge of a son, or some male relation or friend ; but this custom has never been sanctioned by general usage, and is so objectionable, as far as regards the attention and comfort which every guest has a right to expect from his host, that it is not likely ever to prevail. It is true that bad health, advanced age, or accidental circumstances, may place a gentleman as a guest at his own table ; but when these do not exist, his appropriate situation is, certainly, at the lower end of the table. The same objections do not apply to a lady resigning her situation to the gentleman who would otherwise be placed at her right hand ; because, if he is to carve, he can do so with more ease when situated at the head of the table, and the lady is left more

free to distribute her attention and conversation to those who surround her. To a young woman in particular this is allowable; the graceful deportment of a lady at her own table, which is generally so pleasing to her husband, would be much diminished, if she were either obliged to carve, or her attention were directed too much to the supplying the plates of her visitors. Ladies, however, who have been married some years, generally prefer to carve for themselves; and, as habit has made them expert, they manage it without being too much engrossed by it.

Mrs. L.—Although carving may not be absolutely essential in a lady, do you not think it a desirable art for every one to acquire?

Mrs. B.—Certainly. Every lady should be able, when occasion calls for it, to carve without awkwardness, and should know what are considered the delicate parts of every dish that comes before her, that she may be able to point them out to others. When she herself carves, she has to set an example to her servants of neatness and care; for, besides the disagreeable appearance of a badly-carved dish, the waste that attends it is not inconsiderable, and it should be remembered, that when carelessness in this particular, or, indeed in any other, characterizes the head of a family, the example spreads throughout every other branch of it.

Mrs. L.—Will you oblige me with some directions on this point?

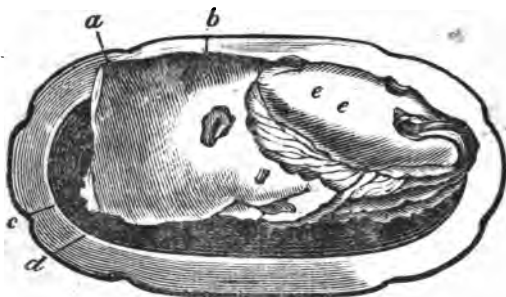
Mrs. B.—The following rules will, perhaps, assist you; and, to render them more intelligible, they are illustrated by rough drawings, dotted where the joints or contents of the dishes ought to be cut.

In the first place: the carving-knife should be light and sharp; and it should be firmly grasped; although in using it, strength is not as essential as skill, particularly if the butcher has properly divided the bones of such joints as the neck, loin, and breast of veal or of mutton.

The dish should not be far from the carver ; for when it is too distant, by occasioning the arms to be too much extended, it gives an awkward appearance to the person, and renders the task more difficult.

In carving fish, care should be taken not to break the flakes, and this is best avoided by the use of a fish trowel, which not being sharp, divides it better than a steel knife. Examine this little drawing, and you will see how a cod's head and shoulders should be carved.*

Fig. 1.

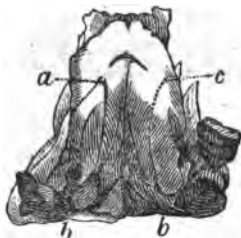


The first piece may be taken off in the direction of *a b*, by putting in the trowel at the back or thick part of the fish, and the rest in successive order. A small part of the sound should be given with each slice, and will be found close to the back-bone, by raising the thin flap *d*. It is known by being darker coloured and more transparent than the other parts of the fish. Almost every part of a cod's head is considered good ; the palate, the tongue, the jelly, and firm parts, *e e*, upon and immediately around the jaw and bones of the head, are considered as delicate eating by many persons.

* The head and shoulders of a cod contain the richest and best part of this excellent fish.—*Am. Ed.*

A boiled fowl has the legs bent inward (see *fig. 2.*), and fastened to the sides by a skewer, which is removed before the fowl is sent to table. A roasted fowl should not have any part of the legs cut off, as in the boiled fowl; but after they have been properly scraped and washed, they are drawn together at the very extremity of the breast. A boiled and a roasted fowl are each carved in the same manner. The wings are taken off in the direction of *a* to *b* (*fig. 2.*). Your knife must divide the joint, but afterwards you have only to take firm hold of the pinion with your fork, draw the wing towards the legs, and you will find that the muscles separate better than if you cut them with your knife. Slip your knife between the leg and the body, and cut to the bone, then with the fork turn the leg back, and, if the fowl be not a very old one, the joints will give way.

Fig. 2.



After the four quarters are thus removed, enter the knife at the breast, in the direction *c d* (*fig. 3.*), and you will

Fig. 3.



separate the merrythought from the breast-bone ; and by placing your knife under it, lift it up, pressing it backwards on the dish, and you will easily remove that bone. The collar-bones, *e e*, lie on each side the merrythought, and are to be lifted up at the broad end, by the knife, and forced towards the breast-bone, till the part which is fastened to it breaks off. The breast is next to be separated from the carcass, by cutting through the ribs on each side, from one end of the fowl to the other. The back is then laid upwards, and the knife passed firmly across it, near the middle, while the fork lifts up the other end. The side bones are lastly to be separated ; to do which turn the back from you, and on each side the back-bone, in the direction of *g g* (*fig. 4.*),

Fig. 4.



you will find a joint, which you must separate, and the cutting up of the fowl will be complete.

Ducks and partridges are to be cut up in the same manner ; in the latter, however, the merrythought is seldom separated from the breast, unless the birds are very large.

Turkeys and geese have slices cut on each side of the breast-bone, and by beginning to cut from the wings upwards to the breast-bone, many more slices may be obtained than if you cut from the breast-bone to the wings, although I do not think the slices are quite as handsome as if cut in the latter method.

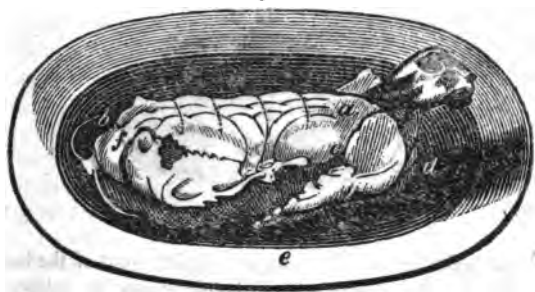
Pigeons (see *fig. 6*) are either cut from the neck to *a*,



which is the fairest way, or from *b* to *c*, which is now the most fashionable mode; and the lower part is esteemed the best.

There are two ways of carving a hare. When it is young, the knife may be entered near the shoulder at *a* (see *fig. 7.*), and cut down to *b*, on each side of the back-

Fig. 7.



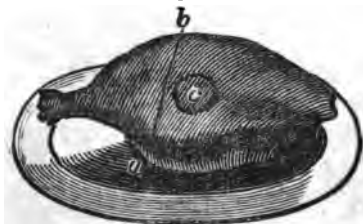
bone; and thus the hare will be divided into three parts. The back is to be again divided into four parts, where the dotted lines are in the cut: these and the legs are considered the best parts, though the shoulders are preferred by some, and are to be taken off in the direction of *c d e*

The pieces should be laid neatly on the plates, as they are separated, and each plate served with stuffing and gravy. When the hare is old, it is better not to attempt the division down the back, which would require much strength; but the legs should be separated from the body at *f*, and then the meat cut off from each side, and divided into moderate-sized pieces. If the brains and ears are required, cut off the head, and put your knife between the upper and lower jaw, and divide them, which will enable you to lay the upper jaw flat on the dish: then force the point of your knife into the centre, and having cut the head into two parts, distribute the brains with the ears to those who like them.

Rabbits are carved in the same manner as a hare, except that the back is divided only into two pieces, which, with the legs, are considered the most delicate parts.

A Ham is generally cut in the direction of *a* to *b*, *fig. 8.*

Fig. 8.



down to the bone, and through the prime part of the ham. Another way is to cut a small hole at *c*, and to enlarge it by cutting circular pieces out of it; this method brings you to the best part of the ham directly, and has an advantage over the other in keeping in the gravy.

A leg of mutton is more easily carved than any other joint, but nevertheless there is a mode of doing it neatly, which should be observed. The first slice should be

taken out at *a* (*fig. 9.*) between the knuckle *b* and the

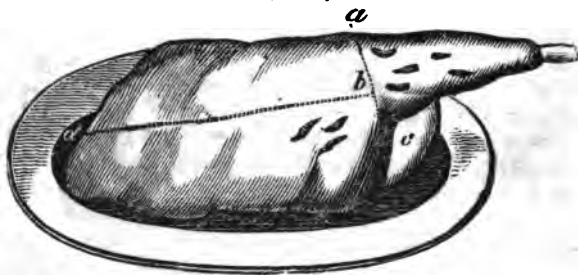
Fig. 9.



thick end ; and the second and subsequent slices should be cut in this direction, until you are stopped by the cramp-bone at *c* ; then turn it up, and take the remaining slices from the back, in a longitudinal direction. When the leg is rather lean, help some fat from the broad end with each slice. The best and most juicy slices are towards the broad end : but some persons prefer the knuckle : and where economy is an object, the knuckle should always be eaten when the joint is hot, as it becomes very dry when cold. If the joint is to be brought again to table, it has a much neater and more respectable appearance if it be helped, altogether, from the knuckle end, when it is hot. This direction may appear trifling ; but a good economist knows the importance of carving, when the circumstances of a family require that a joint be brought a second time to table.

A haunch of venison (*fig. 10.*) should be cut down to

Fig. 10.

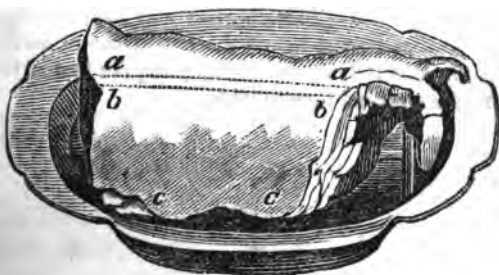


the bone in the direction of the line *a b c*, by which means the gravy is allowed to flow out: then the carver, turning the broad end of the haunch towards him, should cut in deep from *b* to *d*. He then cuts thin slices in the same direction, taking care to give to each person whom he helps a due proportion of fat, which is, by lovers of venison, highly prized: there is generally more of this delicacy on the left side of *b d* than on the other side.

A haunch of mutton is carved in the same manner as venison.

A saddle of mutton (*fig. 11.*) is cut from the tail to the

Fig. 11.



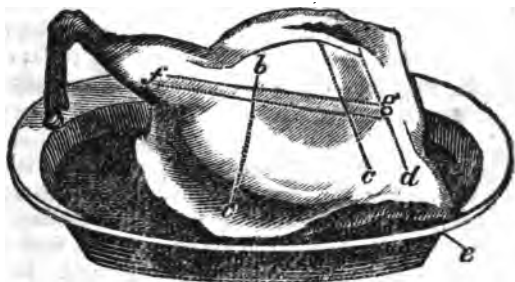
CARVING.

end on each side the back-bone, in the direction of the lines *a b*, continuing downwards to the edge *c*, until it become too fat. The slices should be cut thin, and if the joint be a large one, they may be divided into two parts. The fat will be found on the sides.

A sucking pig is cut up before it is sent to table. The ribs may be divided into two parts as well as the joints. The ribs are considered the finest part, and the neck end under the shoulder. Part of the kidneys should be added to each helping.

A shoulder of mutton, if properly roasted, is supposed to yield many choice pieces, but this depends very much upon the carver. The first cut should be in the direction *c b* (*fig. 12.*); and, after taking a few slices on each side

Fig. 12.



of the gap which follows the first cut, some good slices may be obtained on each side of the ridge of the shoulder-blade, in the direction *c d*. When the party is numerous, slices may be taken from the under side; and it is on this side, under the edge *e*, that the fat is found.*

* Another way of carving a shoulder of mutton, and one which many persons prefer, is in slices from the knuckle to the broad end of the shoulder, beginning on the outside. See the lines *f* and *g*.

Mrs. L.—Will you oblige me by specifying, more particularly, the parts which are considered as the most delicate of those dishes which are usually placed at the head of the table?

Mrs. B.—Of a Turbot the thickest part is considered the best; but the fins are regarded as delicacies, and a small portion of them should be offered to every one to whom the fish is sent. Those, however, who care less for appearance and fashion, and are acquainted with this fish, prefer the back or brown side; and it certainly has more flavour than the white side.

Of Salmon a portion both of the thick and the thin part should be given; but of Cod, the thin part not being generally reckoned the best, the thick white flakes, with the sound and the firm parts about the head, are the most esteemed. The middle part of Soles, Haddocks, large Whitings, and Trout, is the preferable part, but the tail end is the best part of the Mackerel. A part of the roe or milt and liver, should be distributed to each plate; and in helping flaky fish, such as cod and haddock, care should be taken to lift the flakes from the bone without breaking them.

Though few joints are placed at the head of the table, still it is desirable that every lady should be able to carve them judiciously. In a Breast of Veal, the best slices are to be had from the brisket; in a Leg of Lamb, from the middle, between the knuckle and the thick end. In the Calf's Head, the fleshy glandular portion near the neck is the best: whilst the eye, neatly taken out with the point of the carving-knife, and the palate, are the most delicate parts.

The breasts, the wings, and the merry-thoughts of all kinds of poultry, and feathered game, are the most esteemed, with the exception of the Woodcock, the legs of which are preferred to any other part. The tip of the wing of the Partridge is a morsel highly prized by the epicure in eating.

Mrs. L.—Can a lady refuse to take wine with a gentleman when requested?

Mrs. B.—It is not the custom to refuse the request, nor is it considered polite; though I think it may be done, provided the manner in which it is done be so tempered by politeness as to avoid the unpleasantness of offending.*

Mrs. L.—What is your opinion with regard to the discontinuance of the old custom of drinking healths?

Mrs. B.—I think the total omission of the old custom not altogether defensible; for, although the routine of drinking healths by every individual is a formality which may be well dispensed with, yet I should prefer the ancient fashion to be preserved, as far as regards the friends at whose social board we are guests, and whose attentions seem to claim some acknowledgment and tribute of respect on our parts. There is in my mind an apparent heartlessness in the present fashion; and a little of that honest warmth which characterized the rude hospitality of our forefathers would not detract from the refinement of the present age, but would increase the pleasures of the social table. Toasts, on the contrary, are properly exploded; for they restrained the liberty of the guest, and forced him to take more wine than he might desire; and although few were ever given in the presence of the ladies, yet those that passed after they had retired kept the gentlemen from the drawing-room in the evening, which you may think a sufficient reason why the female part of society should discountenance the drinking of toasts.

Mrs. L.—Will you permit me to say, that I think the ladies retire, in general, too soon from the dining-room. I have perceived the lady of the house, frequently, restless and uneasy, until she could find an opportunity of carrying off the female part of her visitors; and as every

* In taking a glass of wine, it is not necessary that a lady should drink it. By merely tasting, she performs all that politeness requires, and thereby avoids giving offence.—*Amer. Ed.*

gentleman to whom I have spoken on this subject has condemned this fashion, I should wish to hear your opinion as to the time at which the withdrawing should take place.

Mrs. B.—The custom for the ladies to retire soon after dinner is the relic of a barbarous age, when the bottle circulated so freely, and toast upon toast succeeded each other so rapidly, that the gentlemen of a company soon became unfit to conduct themselves with the decorum essential in the presence of the female sex. But in the present age, when temperance is a striking feature in the character of a gentleman; and when delicacy of conduct towards the female sex has increased with the esteem in which they are now held, on account of their superior education and attainments, the early withdrawing of the ladies from the dining-room is to be deprecated; as it prevents much conversation which might afford gratification and amusement, both to the ladies and the gentlemen. The truth of this remark is almost generally acknowledged in polite circles; and it is not, now, customary for the ladies to retire very soon after dinner. A lapse in the conversation will occasionally indicate a seasonable time for the change to take place.

I may take this opportunity of remarking, that servants should be instructed to attend to the drawing-room fire, and to prepare the lights after dinner. Prints, periodical works, or other publications of a light kind, ought to be dispersed about the room, and are sometimes useful to engage the attention, when any thing like *ennui* is observable. Coffee should be brought up soon, and the gentlemen summoned.

Mrs. L.—It is not usual, I believe, for a lady to be in full dress when she entertains a party at dinner.

Mrs. B.—The dress of a lady at dinner parties should be plainer at home than abroad; otherwise a reflection might be implied on such of her guests whose dress is in-

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able accidents which a slippery floor inevitably occasions among the lively votaries of Terpsichore.

MRS. B.—A chalked floor is useful, too, in disguising, for the time, an old or ill-coloured floor, which would otherwise form a miserable contrast to the elegant chandeliers, and the well-dressed belles and beaux. When the season will allow it, we must not forget to fill the fireplace with flowers and plants, which, indeed, form an appropriate and pleasing ornament on the landing-places, and in other parts of the house through which the guests may have to pass.

In consulting the beauty of the fair visitants, those flowers should be selected which reflect colours in harmony with the human complexion; as, for example, the Rose, the early white Azalea, the white and pink Hyacinth, and other flowers of similar tints. There should not be an over proportion of green: for, as this colour reflects the blue and yellow rays, it is by no means favourable to the female complexion; and still worse are yellow and orange-coloured groups, whether of natural or artificial flowers. In some degree, however, the flowers should be chosen to harmonize also with the colour of the paper, or the walls of the ball-room.

The music should always be good, as much of the pleasure of dancing depends upon it. Violins, with harp and flute accompaniments, form the most agreeable band for dancing.

The lady of the house, who is expected to appear in rather conspicuous full dress, should be in readiness to receive her guests in good time; allowing herself a few minutes' leisure to survey her rooms, to ascertain that every thing is in proper order, and that nothing is defective in any of her arrangements. The arrival of her guests will be between the hours of nine and twelve.

A retiring room should be in readiness for ladies who may wish to disburthen themselves of shawls and cloaks;

and here a female should be in attendance to receive them, and to perform any little office of neatness which a lady's dress may accidentally require. Tea and coffee may also be presented in this room, if any be deemed necessary ; but of late the custom of introducing these refreshments at balls has been nearly abolished.

Three men servants, at least, are necessary, and as many more as the sphere of life of the individual who gives the ball sanctions. One servant should attend at the door of the house ; and receiving the names of the company as they arrive, he should transmit them to another, who should conduct the party into the ante-room, while he in turn communicates their arrival to a third at the drawing-room door, who should announce them to the lady of the house. Her station should be as near the entrance of the room as possible, that her friends may not have to search for her to whom, of course, they wish first to pay their respects, and from whom they expect their welcome. As soon as a sufficient number of dancers are arrived, the young people should be introduced to partners, that they may not, by any unreasonable delay of their expected amusement, lose their self-complacency, and cast the reflection of dulness on the party. When the lady of the house is a dancer, she generally commences the dance ; but when this is not the case, her husband should lead out the greatest stranger, or person of highest rank present : and while one dance is proceeding, *la Maitresse du bal*, if a French term be allowable, should be preparing another set of dancers to take the place of those upon the floor as soon as they have finished. Nothing displays more want of management and method, than a dead pause after a dance ; while the lady, all confusion at so disagreeable a circumstance, is begging those to take their places who have, perhaps, never been introduced to partners. There should be no monopoly of this delightful recreation, but all the dancers in the party should enjoy it in regular succession.

Refreshments, such as ices, lemonade, negus, and small rout cakes, should be handed round between every two or three dances, unless a room be appropriated for such refreshments. Supper should be announced at half-past twelve or at one o'clock, never later : and each gentleman should then be requested to take charge of a lady to the supper-room. Both with regard to the pleasure of her company, and her own comfort, La Maitresse would do well to discountenance the habit, which is sometimes sanctioned, of the gentlemen remaining long in the supper-room after the ladies have retired.

Mrs. L.—Indeed, I entirely agree with you in this opinion, for when the gentlemen remain in the supper-room, it frequently causes a formal party of silent and listless fair ones, who seem to consider this temporary suspension of their amusement as an evil of sufficient magnitude to rob their countenances of the smiles of cheerfulness and good-humour, which they had worn during the preceding part of the evening. As our gentle islanders lose half their charms when they lose their good humour, it is charitable to them to prevent, if possible, this half-hour of discomfiture. Of what, my dear madam, should a supper for such a party consist ? Is it an expensive addition to the entertainment ?

Mrs. B.—The variety of little delicacies of which suppers generally consist, makes them rather expensive. The table is usually crowded with dishes, which, however, contain nothing of a more solid nature than chickens, tongue, collared eels, prawns, lobsters,* trifles, jellies, blancmange, whips, fruit, ornamental confectionary, &c. French wines are frequently presented at suppers. As it would be scarcely possible to seat a very large party at once at a supper-table, it is advisable to keep one part of

* To these may be added, ham cut into thin slices, and oysters both stewed and pickled. Prawns are not to be obtained ; and eels, though a good eatable fish, are too common, and not fashionable in the United States.—*Amer. Ed*

the company dancing in the ball-room, while another is at supper : and, even in this case, the gentlemen need not be seated nor sup until the ladies have retired. Very little apparent exertion is necessary in the lady of the house, yet should she contrive to speak to most of her guests some time during the evening, and to the greatest strangers she should pay more marked attention.

Mrs. L.—What ceremonies are to be observed at routs ?

Mrs. B.—The preparations for a rout, with the exception of removing the carpet, chalking the floor, and providing music and a supper, are similar to those for a ball. The same announcements are requisite ; the lady of the house is required to receive her guests in the same manner ; and refreshments are to be provided in the waiting-room : but, farther, the assembled groups are left to amuse themselves, if amusement can be found in a crowd resembling that which fills the lobbies of a theatre on the first night of a new performance. To a person unacquainted with fashionable life, nothing can appear more extraordinary than the influence of fashion in these gregarious assemblies. The secret, however, is this :—few expect an gratification from the rout itself ; but the whole pleasure consists in the anticipation of the following days' gossip, which the faintings, tearing of dresses, and elbowings which have occurred, are likely to afford. To meet a fashionable friend next day in the Park, without having been at Lady A—'s, would be sufficient to exclude the absentee from any claim to *ton* ; while to have been squeezed into a corner with the Marchioness of B—, or the Duchess of C—, is a most enviable event, and capable of affording conversation for at least ten days.

Mrs. L.—Are conversaziones conducted in the same manner ?

Mrs. B.—Not exactly. Conversaziones are more select meetings both in respect to the number and the characters of the individuals who are invited. To routs the invita-

tions are general and unlimited ; to conversazioni they are limited, and the individuals are, at least, supposed to possess a taste for information, whether obtained from books or from conversation.

This description of evening amusement is not, however, general, but is confined either to literary circles, or to those persons of rank and fortune who wish to patronise literature. When you wish to give a conversazione, the party should be selected with some care ; and although persons of the same pursuits should be brought together, yet individuals of the most opposite characters and acquirements should also be invited, to give variety and interest to the conversation, which is the object of the assembly. The tables should be spread with the newest publications, prints, and drawings : shells, fossils, and other natural productions should, also, be introduced, to excite attention and promote remark.

Mrs. L.—This is a most rational species of entertainment. Why is it so little in fashion ?

Mrs. B.—One cause of its rarity is the mania which prevails for music, without which no species of entertainment is regarded worthy of attention. This is a circumstance to be lamented, for nothing would contribute more to the general diffusion of information, and consequently to the improvement of society.

Mrs. L.—How are card parties conducted ?

Mrs. B.—The invitations to these are similar to those issued for routs and balls, with the change of the word, “quadrilles,” to “cards.” As many should be invited as will fill up a certain number of whist tables, with the addition of a loo or round table. Tea and coffee are handed to the guests on their arrival, and wine, cakes, and ices are handed round to the players at intervals during the evening. Each whist table should be furnished with at least two new packs of cards, differently coloured on the backs, besides counters for markers. The lady of the

house generally fixes the value of the points, which determine the game; and she should, also, be prepared to change the players at table, as soon as the rubber is declared to be over. As all the company is not always engaged in play, the lady of the house, as well as her husband, should remain disengaged, to lead into conversation those who are strangers to one another, and to promote the general amusement of the guests.

Mrs. L.—According to your account, conversaziones and card parties may be united?

Mrs. B.—Certainly; and these are, perhaps, the most rational description of evening entertainments in the metropolis. The introduction of cards, takes off the air of pedantry which is supposed to pervade a pure conversazione, while the introduction of conversation at card parties, sets aside the character of gaming, which might be attached to a party met solely for the purposes of play. Many of our ablest men of science and in literature, are fond of whist, and would willingly go to such a mixed party, although they would hesitate to attend one purely conversational, or convened solely for card-playing.

Such are the forms of visiting in London and its diate neighbourhood. Perhaps in other parts of the dom there may be, in some few particulars, a difference in form, but I do not apprehend that to be the case in any essential points. But it is now time to dress for dinner, and I am afraid this conversation is not closed before you are completely tired of its minuteness in detail.

CONVERSATION VII.

**ECONOMY.—DRESS AND EXPENSIVE TASTES.—COLLECTIONS
OF WORKS OF ART.—OLD CHINA.—LIBERALITY.—BENE-
VOLENCE.—PRESENTS.—FASHION.**

Mrs. B.—The subjects upon which I intend to turn our conversation to-day, may not, on the first view, appear to you of much importance; yet I do not believe you will find, after a little consideration, the time ill spent which we may devote to them. Want of judgment and reflection on some of the points to which I allude, have frequently occasioned inconvenience and anxiety; and in some instances within my recollection, have even led to impropriety and meannesses of conduct highly censurable.

Mrs. L.—I suppose it is of economy you propose to speak. That is a subject which wears too sober an aspect, to be much courted by the young and the gay; and I own that hitherto I have very little considered it, or encouraged the habit of attending to its precepts. I am, however, aware that my negligence on this point can no longer escape with impunity; for I find already that the claims on my purse are much increased in my new sphere of action. Perhaps, too, a feeling of regret, that I am as yet so complete a novice in many things which are become essential to my comfort, makes me enter upon this topic with more willingness than I once thought it could ever command from me.

Mrs. B.—A nearer view of this subject will, I am persuaded, diminish its sombre aspect. It is not parsimony, but the just appropriation of income, according to the rank, style, and fortune of every individual, that I desire to enforce. Economy, in this light, is a virtue as worthy

to be practised by the affluent, as by those in limited circumstances. Whenever I hear of the rich acting with the littleness of the poor,—of their being compelled, not only to restrain every generous impulse, but to delay the payment of their just debts, frequently to the detriment of honest and laborious people,—I cannot but lament their neglect of this virtue, the observance of which could not fail to prevent these inconveniences, and increase the comfort and cheerfulness of general society; while it would add lustre to the rank and character of the great. If those who have limited incomes do not make economy their rule, by adapting their habits to their fortunes, and by a judicious arrangement of their expenses, numberless must be the inconveniences and trials they are doomed to undergo. Necessity will, indeed, teach them a hard lesson, which the practice of economy might have spared them. Extravagance is certainly a levelling principle, which renders all its votaries alike needy; while economy, if it have not the power of alchymy, at least confers a twofold value on every possession.

Mrs. L.—I have hitherto considered economy as a mean quality, unworthy my attention, or as requisite only among the humble orders of the community; but this notion, you will tell me, has its origin from misapprehension of the term *economy*.

Mrs. B.—Your remark is very true. The species of economy which is of general use, is a judicious adaptation of expenditure to income (as I have before remarked), and not the constant struggle to diminish expenses, and to save in every iota. When necessity requires this kind of economy, she teaches it at the same time experimentally, which is more effectual than any theoretical lesson. But when inclination alone prompts the vigilant effort to save, a narrow and avaricious spirit is betrayed, which should be checked as early as possible, lest it should in later life be visible in all the ugliness of parsimony.

We will suppose that the necessary circumstances of establishment, suitable to ~~the new state of~~ ~~the~~ couple, has been ascertained, as in the case; and that such regulations have been laid down, may tend to keep it within its proper bounds; then, the next point to be investigated is the extent to which personal expenses and tastes may proceed.

MR. L.—Will you favour me with your opinion on this, which appears to me to be generally too much regulated before marriage, and too little afterwards?

MR. B.—I am afraid your remark cannot be considered unjust, though I am inclined to think that negligence and extravagance is a less common failing in these days than it was a century ago. The want of mental arrangement, of which it is a disgusting proof, is not in the present day owing to the counteracting influence of vanity alone, but to the want of regular and systematic education, which almost every young woman now receives.

MR. L.—But I think I have observed that some who possess superior talents and acquirements have been very inattentive to the minor duties of life, and have apparently confined themselves free to omit those observances which, in your opinion, form the propriety of the female character. Can you reconcile this remark to the assertion which you have just made respecting the effect of modern education in giving order and regulation to the mind?

MR. B.—We must not condemn a system because all do not profit by it equally, although it is true that talents and acquirements lose half their value, when they cause neglect of any quality by which the comfort or well-being of a domestic circle may be promoted. Accomplishments may claim some share of time and attention for the purpose of ornamenting and refining social life, but they should never engross the mind so much as to render impossible or distasteful the fulfilment of every branch of duty, whether of great or of little importance.

Mrs. L.—I think that a husband has reason to complain, if his wife becomes negligent of her personal appearance?

Mrs. B.—Certainly; and she is deserving of censure if her aim to please him, as her husband, be less than that which she exerted to secure him as her lover. That effort which was an act of inclination before her marriage, she should consider as a point of duty afterwards; nor should inattention to any thing agreeable to him, give rise to the mortifying suspicion, that the desire to please him is not so impelling a principle of action, as he had perhaps flattered himself it might always have been. Few husbands are indifferent to the personal appearance of their wives; and still fewer there are who do not regard negligence in dress with even more disgust than it perhaps deserves: though when it arrives at its most aggravated state of slovenliness and want of cleanliness, it becomes a vice, and can scarcely be too much condemned. When this is perceptible in the married female, it needs no augury to foretell the approach of want of order and regularity in her family, and the loss of the esteem and affection of her husband. I remember a young couple, with whom I became acquainted during a season I spent at Cheltenham, who appeared to enter into married life with every advantage which health, competency, good dispositions, and partial friends, could afford. They were young, and agreeable in manners, conversation, and person: to each other they appeared, and really were, strongly attached; the most perfect confidence subsisted between them: the wife good-humouredly acquiesced in the wishes, and interested herself in the pursuits, of the husband: while he, in his turn, was proud of her accomplishments, and delighted with her natural vivacity. They seemed to be (to use a common phrase) cut out for a happy couple. I really experienced considerable regret in parting with this juvenile pair; and was not reluctant to promise them a

at some future time, at their residence in one of the
and counties, a spot, as described to me by the young
formed by nature into all that is lovely, and improved
rt into all that is elegant and comfortable. Of the
of this representation I was enabled four years after-
is to judge, by paying my long-promised visit.

ound my young friends the parents of three blooming
ren. Their house appeared to me to afford ample
mmodation for such a family; their servants were nu-
ous, and there seemed to be no want of that ready
mand of money which enables us to obtain every or-
y comfort. Yet I soon discovered that something
deficient: I heard the husband incessantly complain
e negligence of his servants, the mischievous dispo-
e of his children, and the disorder of the various
ments into which he had occasion to enter; yet,
gh he had at times an air of petulancy, he did not
ar to be an ill-tempered man. I could, however, per-
e, that these annoyances gave him little chagrin in
parison with the daily attire of his wife. It was, in-
very different from that which she had generally
during the time she passed at Cheltenham. The
ty of her clothes was not inferior; rather the con-
for she appeared to think that what was wanting
atness and grace, might be compensated by expense
profusion.

she dressed herself for dinner, her gown was more
stuous than the occasion required, but its soiled and
pled appearance, and the slovenly manner in which
s put on, destroyed all the effect she intended, and
a vulgarity to her appearance which, it was evident,
husband perceived and regretted. Her hair, which
had formerly dressed with attention, was usually in
a state of disorder, that no cap or bonnet could be-
e her; and the other arrangements of her dress were
lly neglected.

There are some circumstances, mere trifles, indeed, which strongly mark a woman of negligent and uncleanly habits ; these are, want of attention to the hair, the teeth, the nails, and to the neatness of the shoe, and the quality and cleanliness of the stocking. Females who are, in youth, careless in these respects, have seldom much order or arrangement in other particulars.

This was the case with my young friend. Her children were proofs of her habitual and increasing negligence : their persons, as well as their clothes, were dirty, and their habits disagreeable. Her servants, over whom a regular and watchful restraint was never exercised, evinced how little importance their mistress attached to order and cleanliness, by their indifference to them. Her house, which had originally every requisite for comfort which modern ingenuity can supply, was neither an agreeable nor a peaceful residence. Her husband, although at heart much attached to his wife, had the painful emotion of being ashamed of his house, and ashamed of his wife ;—and, where a man ceases to feel some portion of pride in the companion he has chosen, disgust soon steps in, and discord follows.

I have since heard that my Cheltenham acquaintance are spoken of in their own neighbourhood as a very unhappy couple. I cannot forbear attributing their uneasiness to the want of attention displayed by the wife to matters trifling in themselves ; but which, from daily recurrence, make up a considerable portion of the sum of domestic happiness.

MRS. L.—But surely a woman would not be justified in paying much attention to dress, when she has a family to regulate and control ?

MRS. B.—Too great an attention to the cares of the toilet is not only an error in itself, but, in many instances, its attendant expenses are truly vexatious. Dress, it is true, may be considered as the criterion of a woman's

One moment's survey decides the question, "Is it good or bad?" And even in this glance, the spectator does not neglect to take into the account, whether the dress is suitable to the station in life, to the circumstances of the time, the figure, and the complexion of its wearer. If he perceive that fashion has not been servilely implicitly followed; that peculiarity has been avoided, simplicity preferred to splendour, the opinion he forms will be in favour of her taste; and the supposition follows, of course, that the good sense which directs her choice of dress will have its influence over every thing of which it is the direction and control.

On the contrary, the want of propriety of dress, whether it arises from the neglect of the person, or by a too studied and extravagant pursuit of fashion, makes a more unfavourable impression on an observing mind, than mere absence of dress would produce. In the one case indolence, self-indulgence, and many other symptoms of an ill-regulated mind are betrayed; and in the other the suspicion cannot fail to arise, that the mind is frivolous and vain, which has wastefully bestowed so much precious time on exterior decoration.

It is not inclined, also, to suspect, that those females whose appearance when in public or in company, appears so minutely correct, are frequently negligent and slovenly in their appearance at home, or of domestic retirement; thus, for the vain-glory of dress, hours, are money, time, and thought squandered, which might have been amply sufficient to have adorned, improved, and refined whole seasons of domestic life.

Another error, or rather folly, is not uncommon; I mean the attempt of attempting to vie in dress with those whom superior talents and fortune entitle to exterior distinction. To do this, is to abandon propriety and good taste, and to render ourselves liable to, and deserving of ridicule and contempt; besides incurring the more serious inconveniences arising from any expense which is incompatible with our fortunes.

Mrs. L.—There are several objects of taste in which I am inclined to indulge, provided I can do so prudently ; but as I am gaining wisdom by your instructions, I shall not be so ready as formerly to gratify any propensity, at the expense of prudence.

Mrs. B.—Under due regulations you may indulge most of the tastes you have formerly cultivated ; especially those which direct the attention to subjects of an improving nature. Some are anxious to collect shells, those beautiful productions of the deep, which interest almost every eye ; some, the still lovelier ornaments which nature presents in the vegetable kingdom ; and others the choicest works of art. But the best collections of shells must be viewed as mere baubles, affording only childish pleasure, if unaccompanied by some acquaintance with the nature and habits of their briny, little artificers. The simplest plant, also, that ornaments the garden or the green-house, would, if examined, tell a tale of wonder, which might doubly augment the delight with which its form and colours are surveyed ; and the finest collection of engravings may be turned over carelessly and listlessly, only for want of that general knowledge, by which the mind receives an insight into the merits and beauties of every specimen of art. Too many admire these because it is fashionable to do so, without feeling any interest in the productions of nature, or having any taste for the merits of the works of art ; preferring the risk of having their false pretensions to knowledge discovered, rather than take the trouble of acquiring it. I have seen very fine collections of paintings and drawings in the possession of ladies, who knew scarcely a single reason for the admiration which they drew forth from their visitors, beyond what had been drilled into them by those upon whose better judgment they had relied. To display a collection under such circumstances is to emblazon ignorance.

Mrs. L.—What is your opinion of the collectors of old china ?

Ms. B.—The taste, if it deserve that name, for old
 , has been introduced by fashion; and as the value
 ch collections depends chiefly upon so arbitrary and
 tile a power, it is not a research worthy of much in-
 nce. To spend any considerable sum of money or
 on things which in a few years may be disregarded
 anished to some dark closet, or dusty shelf, is no
 either of taste or of prudence

expensive inclinations must be drawn within very con-
 bounds indeed, when the income is small. No
 ure which their gratification can afford, could com-
 te for the painful consciousness of neglecting the
 es of prudence; or of feeling incapable to answer
 st demands of creditors, who gain their maintenance
 y enough, without having the additional anxiety of
 ing their remuneration to an indefinite and remote
 d; but, independent of such considerations, the mother
 family should carefully suppress expensive tastes, on
 ore of example; as her daughters may not, when
 ed, be able to gratify similar fancies, without the
 ice of prudence.

Ms. L.—And after all, these tastes must yield prece-
 e to the superior claims of liberality and benevolence.
 these, you will tell me, may be carried too far.

Ms. B.—Surely they must have their limits prescribed,
 ll as every thing else, although, when exercised with
 etion, what can be more pleasing or more likely to
 urage reciprocity of kindly feeling in all around us?
 eral spirit gives a charm to existence, which cannot
 mprehended by a narrow and selfish disposition.

Let us enter more freely on the claims of charity, both
 ar purse and on our personal exertions. You, who
 every luxury around you, cannot but desire to dispense
 rtion of your superfluity, in comforting the sick and
 y, or in aiding the unfortunate in their struggles with
 rsity.

Mrs. L.—Indeed, I hope I shall not hesitate to sacrifice some of the baubles of life, or even a few of its comforts, if necessary, in the exercise of the *duties*, I may say the pleasures, of benevolence.

Mrs. B.—To cultivate benevolence is a duty we owe to ourselves as well as to our fellow-creatures, and no limitation of fortune should exclude the *desire* to aid and comfort the afflicted, though that desire must be under the constant control of prudence and judgment. It was the spirit of benevolence and humility with which the widow gave her mite, that enhanced its value beyond all the riches cast into the treasury: and her example affords encouragement to those whose inclinations to do good exceed their abilities; it is an exhortation to all of us “to go and do likewise.”

Mrs. L.—Political economists censure the charity of English women, as having tended, with many other circumstances, to destroy a laudable spirit of independence among the lower orders of the community, who now claim relief and assistance from the benevolent, rather as a right than as a gratuity.

Mrs. B.—Much may be said on that subject; but you and I not being reformists, can only seek to direct our conduct skilfully, and to adapt it to existing circumstances. Women may have erred, and may still err, as political economists; but who would wish them to subdue, with the cold arguments of the statesman, some of the best feelings with which their hearts can be animated? Beauty pleading for the woes of others, the poet knows how to work into a fascinating picture for the imagination to dwell upon; but all the beauty and grace which he could portray would have no charm for us, if they were engaged in a heartless struggle with the benevolent impulses of our natures. Our aim should be to regulate, and not to annihilate, the emotions.

To the arguments of political economists, however,

attention should be paid by the female world ; for sympathies which reside in the breast of women produce in them such an interest in the fate of every one over whom the shade of misfortune has thrown its gloom, that they are too apt to be guided in their charities more by sudden impulses of feeling, than by any act of judgment or reason. Hence the most unworthy objects are up- taken in their courses of deceit ; and the spirit of honest independence is weakened in its power of influencing the conduct of the lower orders, and enabling them to provide for old age and unforeseen misfortunes. Benevolence, if misapplied, and charity misapplied, may cause the downfall of a state as readily as luxury or any other vice ; for no moment a man can bring himself to receive an alms- offering, when his wants have not sunk him into the abyss of wretchedness attendant on extreme poverty, and he loses his character of a citizen, and becomes a degraded, wretched slave.

Mr. L.—Of this I am aware ; and I believe that to be indiscriminate is like extravagance in any other kind of expenditure :—it limits the power to do all the good we desire.

Mr. B.—I do not think benevolence can be properly exercised, without devoting to it both time and trouble. Every inquiry into every tale of distress should, if possible, be the forerunner of the act to relieve. Imposition is common not to render this needful ; and if it were generally observed, it would prevent the disgust which the most charitable dispositions cannot but occasionally feel, when they discover that their alms and exertions have been misplaced. This is the chief mortification which benevolence has to experience ; but happily not sufficient to check its course, although it ought to excite its vigilance to secure against future deceptions. Indeed, it is a duty to society to unmask imposition when it is discovered ; for it is melancholy to reflect, how

large a portion of the community is lost to creditable society, by pursuing such unworthy practices ; and it is still more mortifying to discover that many, as I have already remarked, whom necessity might have urged to industry, have become idle, profligate, and paupers, from the facility with which they have obtained alms.

Mrs. L.—Visiting the houses of the poor I have always found a good practice, as it enables one to judge of the real state of each family.

Mrs. B.—This cannot readily be done by women in the metropolis, or in other great towns ; but in country residences the same objections do not exist, and it has so many advantages, that, where it can be effected, it should not be omitted. Besides enabling you to form a proper opinion of the necessities of each case, it gives an opportunity of advising and instructing the poor in cleanliness, industry, and general good management, in all of which they are too often extremely defective. Many instances have occurred, in which this occasional superintendence has produced more beneficial effects, than the gifts that accompanied the visits, by giving the poor, the creditable pride of being clean and industrious, and of bringing up their families in good and regular habits. It is not sufficient to send your servants to make inquiries, and to examine into any case of distress ; their report is seldom accurate, owing to their prejudices and feelings colouring too deeply their opinions.

The charitable institutions, which abound in almost every district, afford the means to do extensive good at a trifling expense. The lying-in charities ; and the societies for providing the poor with change of linen during illness, are excellent institutions, and extend relief from one end of the kingdom to another, without being too heavy an expense for any one. But I am not quite so great an admirer of those societies which are formed for clothing the poor. I believe much greater benefits would be con-

ed by teaching them, or at least their children, how
ut out and to make their own clothes. These arts are
oming almost unknown among the lower order ; and
, though it may chiefly be caused by the females being
aged in working at manufactories, has been increased
the ease with which they have procured from the
ritable, ready supplies of every article of clothing.
e object of charity should be to relieve and comfort
e who labour under sickness and the infirmities of old
, or it should be directed in promoting the suitable
cation of the children of the poor. A woman who is
pelled to make and repair the clothes of her family
be much more careful of them than one who imagines
can draw upon the treasury of benevolence for all her
nts. To increase the knowledge of the poor, in every
ect, is of importance ; for, although it be not easy to
ghten the individual who has journeyed through half
course of existence, in a state of ignorance, or to
nge the habits which years have strengthened and
firmed, yet, occasionally an instance may occur, in
ch instruction proves a blessing of far greater value
a alms, producing such effects upon the welfare and
its of a family, as would result from no other cause ;
this should stimulate the benevolent in the good work,
ough they may meet with unconquerable difficulties
nety-nine instances out of a hundred.

Mrs. L.—I hope you do not consider that want of zeal
be cause of charity is a feature in the character of the
men of the present day ?

Mrs. B.—On the contrary, there is abundance of zeal
played in every rank and circle of society. I only
et that so virtuous an impulse is not always properly
ected, and comfort and relief bestowed in a proportion
al to the time and money expended. You must re-
mber that charity without judgment is like scattering
d in the ocean, where it sinks or is dissipated on the

waves ; but, with judgment, it is like seed sown in a friendly and fertile soil, which springs up in due season, and produces a thousand fold in return. In the first case, it is the ruin of individual independence, and of that honest pride which seeks to oppose industry and frugality to the pressure of necessity ; while, in the other, it is the blessing of Heaven, and the salvation of sinking virtue in the hour of adversity ; and presents the sublimest trait in the human character.

Mrs. L.—I entirely agree with you, and shall be solicitous to regulate this part of my conduct with discretion ; but it is very difficult, when the feelings are liable to be strongly excited, to summon our judgment at the moment we need its aid. We may lay down our system and resolve to act upon it, but the impulse of an instant will often give it a death-blow. I wish now to hear your opinion on the *custom* of giving presents.

Mrs. B.—Where presents are given merely because it is customary, I think the custom frequently proves a tax rather on our kind and friendly feelings than a gratification ; and, although we yield with apparent pleasure to it, yet, we often find it both inconvenient and burdensome. I met with an instance of this very lately, when visiting my friend Mrs. D. Among the younger branches of her family I heard many lively discussions on the *absolute* necessity of presenting gifts to a young friend who was on the point of marriage ; while, at the same time, it was unanimously regretted that these presents would deeply infringe upon their several allowances, and oblige them for some time to become niggardly both to themselves and others. The beauty and elegance of various bagatelles were described, and as each was solicitous to outvie the others in the superiority of her selection, I could perceive that ostentation gave a stronger impulse than friendship and affection to the transaction, and gained a decided victory over prudence and good sense. One member only

this youthful group raised her voice against this waste of money. She readily foresaw how inadequate a gratification would be afforded by it, either to the receiver of the gifts, or the donors. "Only reflect," said she, "in trifling a degree will Miss C. value our offerings, in comparison with those she will have from her relations and greater intimates. The value of theirs will be, of course, enhanced also by the proportionate claims upon her affection: she *may* perhaps be pleased with our presents; and after writing us a note of acknowledgment, will give our *bijoux* a place in her cabinet; but, then, so far as she is concerned, there will be an end of it: while we, for twelve months to come, must pause to consider, before we purchase any article of dress, whether we will pay for it, and even then must choose what suits our necessities rather than our taste; and as to any act of beneficence and kindness, from which you as well as myself cannot altogether like to abstain, we must give that up entirely; and who can tell how sincerely we may have reason to grieve at this present expenditure?" This remonstrance proved unavailing, and drew from the others only hackneyed replies, such as, "It will be so strange we omit what is customary!—What will Miss C. think of us? She will never again regard us as friends; and I could not, for such a trifle, choose to lose a friend." The presents, therefore, were actually made, and the event most fulfilled the prediction of the dissentient voice. She also was a fellow-sufferer, as she could not in this matter act singly in opposition to the majority of her family.

In such instances, I have no doubt, often occur where pecuniary circumstances are limited, and the ideas and habits are not conformable: in such cases, to be munificent and to be economical, are incompatible; and, in our cool moments, we can easily decide to which we ought to yield. Where an ample fortune, however, admits of this species of genero-

sity, who can condemn it? It bespeaks an attention to the pleasures of others which is not always to be found among those who have too much the power of gratifying themselves. When such gifts are bestowed with the desire to afford a few luxuries to an individual whose means may be insufficient to obtain them, the custom then wears the aspect of benevolence; and if the presents are given in the spirit of kindness, they cannot but be well received. I think, also, that the little interchanges of presents between the members of a family are always pleasing, and afford a tacit assurance of the unchanged affection of each party.

Every mother should, in my opinion, encourage among her children little reciprocities of this kind, and accustom them to think of gratifying the tastes of one another more than their own. I have seen most enviable sensations depicted on the countenances of a little family, when, on a birth-day morning, each, with glee, presented his little gift to his sister, which had been secreted with difficulty for many days, in order the more to surprise her. This early cultivation of the social and benevolent affections is the source of much happiness both to the parent and the child in after-life, to say nothing of the agreeable recollections and associations it connects with the word *home*. Almost at any period of life these recollections have the power to withdraw the mind from present scenes, and to restore, though only in a trifling degree, and for a fleeting moment, that cheerful state of spirits which belongs peculiarly to childhood.

Mrs. L.—It is not so decidedly the fashion to make presents now as it was formerly. I have read and heard of marriages and births being the signals for the display of the greatest generosity (or, as you would perhaps call it, ostentation) throughout a whole circle of relations and connections. How changeable, and yet how powerful for the time is fashion!

Mrs. B.—So powerful, that besides governing our in-

inations, it may be said to subjugate our very reason. Fashion carries us, as it were, in a perpetual stream from which we make no attempt to rescue ourselves, but are borne along through all its windings, and are drawn into the shallows into which folly can pilot us. It does not regulate only the form of our gowns or the arrangement of our head-dress, but superior tastes and opinions are equally under its dominion. The works of art, however meritorious, if not sanctioned by fashion are neglected, and the artists allowed to remain unknown. Fashion buzzes its criticisms abroad, and we all admire or condemn accordingly. I cannot avoid comparing this imitative influence of the majority of mankind to the gregarious principle which keeps together a flock of sheep, and induces them, heedlessly, to follow their leaders even to their own destruction. You, perhaps, have never seen a flock of these harmless but necessary victims to our demands of subsistence driven to the shambles. When near the entrance of the slaughter-houses the poor animals instinctively shrink back, and refuse to enter; but if the butcher drag them in by main force all the rest immediately follow. So powerful is the force of fashion in leading us into habits, which we are fully aware can terminate only in the ruin of our fortunes and the loss of our characters.

Opinion, too, is equally under the sway of this arbitrary power. There is hardly any thing of a public or a domestic nature that escapes it. Fashion, more frequently than good sense, makes us pronounce judgment on the conduct of our governors and legislators; on our clergy and moralists; it regulates our table, frequently at the expense of prudence; and, even, fills our nursery with customs which, with our judgments unbiassed, we should discard as unnatural and injurious. As you are just entering upon a new career, let me recommend you earnestly, not to abandon yourself to the guidance of this inconsistent deity. Conform in those things which are unimportant,

and to deviate from which might give you the epithet of peculiar, but have your judgment in your own keeping, and think for yourself. Thus will you avoid inconsistency and errors which may not be easily retrieved ; thus, also, will you exercise and strengthen the best powers of your mind, and prepare yourself for the discharge of those important duties by which you will find yourself surrounded as you proceed on the journey of life.

PART II.

HOUSEHOLD CONCERNS.

CONVERSATION I.

SERVANTS.—NUMBER.—CHOICE OF.—FOOD OF.—MANAGEMENT OF.—CONDUCT TO.—INDULGENCES TO.—THE IMPORTANCE OF EXAMPLE IN FIXING THEIR MORAL AND RELIGIOUS HABITS.—SUITABLENESS OF DRESS IN SERVANTS.—WAGES.—GIFTS FROM VISITERS.—QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED IN A HOUSEKEEPER.—A COOK.—A HOUSEMAID.—A NURSERY MAID.—A LAUNDRESS.—A FOOTMAN.—A PORTER.—METHOD OF HIRING SERVANTS, WHETHER FROM PRIVATE FAMILIES OR FROM REGISTER OFFICES.—GIVING AND RECEIVING CHARACTERS.

Mrs. L.—My dear Madam, I am full of difficulties, and must apply to you for advice. At the very time in which I had reason to think myself blessed, and have been anticipating happiness almost without alloy, by becoming the chosen companion for life of an estimable man, my mind is harassed and vexed by many annoying circumstances, and what provokes me too, is, that I have often censured other ladies when I have heard them complain of troubles similar to those which now disturb me :—the fact is, my servants are all going wrong. My youth, I suppose, tempts them to take every advantage of me ; and my inexperience makes me dubious what course to pursue with them. I fancied that in securing servants for the various depart-

ments of my house, whose characters were good, and in giving them general orders, my part would be performed, and the whole business of the household would proceed in the same steady regular manner as in my father's house.

Mrs. B.—Your time and thoughts were, I suppose, too much occupied, either with amusements or in adding to your various acquirements, to allow of your paying much attention to the system which regulated your former home. As all your wants were constantly supplied, and you saw yourself and others surrounded with every thing which comfort and elegance required, you, perhaps, never thought on the subject at all, and thus you are at this moment without that knowledge by which alone your family can be governed, and its comfort ensured. But tell me your difficulties, and let me see if I can give you a helping hand out of them.

Mrs. L.—I have certainly been aware, that the business of my household has not been well conducted ; but I considered that the servants were new and would improve ; yesterday, however, my patience was tried to the utmost degree. It was our first dinner-party, and I was, of course, naturally solicitous that every thing should be well and pleasantly arranged ; and I had, as I imagined, given due orders to all the domestics whose services were required. The greater part of the day I was out paying morning visits, and returned only in time to dress for dinner. I was rather discouraged, as I passed the dining-room, to see no preparation, but proceeded to my room without making any remarks. Soon after six our company arrived ; and, for half an hour, I waited in patient expectation of hearing dinner announced : during this time both my husband and I exerted ourselves to keep conversation alive, and to make the time pass quickly, but still, in spite of ourselves and the politeness of our guests, a dead pause would now and then intervene, and these awful pauses I thought would

annihilate me. After many an anxious look at the door, and frequent ringing of the bell, dinner *was* at length announced; and my spirits revived only, alas, to enable me support more vexations. All the preparations had, evidently, been hastily made,—there were not enough of chairs for the guests; the dishes were irregularly placed, and even some omitted; the fish and soup were chilled, and had apparently been served some time; the plates were cold, and the appearance of the whole dinner was entirely spoiled by the careless manner in which it had been prepared and arranged. I cast a look of despair at my husband, and was answered by one from him of disappointment; however, I resolved not to suffer myself to be subdued by it, and I succeeded in throwing off my anxiety, and in scarcely appearing to notice the many unlucky circumstances of the day. The next morning I repaired to the kitchen to make my reflections on the negligence of the preceding day; when, to my utter astonishment, I was told by the cook that the dinner was excellently cooked, was quite hot, and was altogether such as no one could object to, who knew any thing about the matter. The men-servants were equally surprised at my censuring them, though they had shown themselves very careless, and, for want of method, had hurried about the room, jostling each other, and struggling for the possession of some one thing which had been just asked for. Many other complaints I could make, but it would tire you to hear them, as they are similar to those which have, I suppose, been often made by all young housekeepers.

Mrs. B.—I have not the slightest doubt that all these difficulties will vanish in time. In the first place, I hope you have not too many servants, a greater evil, by far, than having too few. A numerous retinue may be gratifying to pride, but waste and disorder generally accompany it, being injurious to comfort as well as to fortune. Hence the common saying that such a family is eaten up by its ser-

vants. It is better for servants to have too much employment than too little ; because, for want of resources, and the inclination to employ themselves usefully and innocently, much leisure assists in corrupting them. If idleness only allowed time for the indulgence of weak and frivolous propensities, the evil would be great ; but it does more ; it opens a wide passage for the ingress of vicious habits. When neither the powers of the mind nor those of the body are usefully employed, moral irregularities must be the consequence.

Mrs. L.—But should not the contrary extreme be also avoided ? We should all be spiritless and discontented, if we had not some portion of time allotted for relaxation. A seasonable suspension of our regular employments tends to make us return to them with pleasure, and with renewed vigour.

Mrs. B.—That is most true ; and every benevolent mind will seek to render *service* as far remote as possible from slavery, by promoting, in a reasonable degree, the comfort of their dependants ; and this being done, the right is increased by which you may exact from them the strictest discharge of their duties. Let us examine to what degree this attention to their comforts should extend.

Their meals should be at regular and early hours ; their food plain, substantial, and good. Butcher's meat once a day is the general allowance for servants in the establishments of those of moderate fortunes, with cheese for supper. The cook, however, should be desired to reserve such pieces of cold meat as would not be sent into the dining-room, for the supper of the men-servants, which, now and then, will prevent the cutting up of a large piece of cheese, and be also a more wholesome and nutritious meal. Some good housekeepers are agreed, that it is more economical to allow meat than cheese for supper ; perhaps the chief difference in expense arises from the circumstance that more meat can be eaten at a meal than cheese.

A pint of good beer for the men, and half that quantity for the women servants, at each meal, is a very sufficient allowance. A restriction in quantity is perhaps necessary where there are men-servants, lest they should be inclined to indulge too freely in drinking : but the allowance should be sufficient, or the temptation to obtain more may be too great for them to resist. Enough of every thing essential should be allowed to our servants, that their strength may be supported. They cannot work well, unless they have food enough, and this with me is a sufficient argument against board wages, which seldom supply them with more than a very moderate portion of food, besides increasing the inducements to obtain by dishonest means an additional allowance of the essentials of life. I cannot help fancying that servants on board wages betray the fact, by the want of contented countenances and cheerful spirits.

Formerly in the houses of the great, and even now in some families of distinction, the upper domestics—the steward, butler, valet, housekeeper, and lady's maid,—had their own table, called the *second table* ; but of late years this has been generally abolished, and, in the present day, all the domestics dine at one table in the servants' hall. The other meals of the higher servants are taken in the housekeeper's room. The under men-servants retain the use of the servants' hall when their employments are ended, and the maid-servants, when their active duties are over, resort with their sewing to the upper housemaid's room. In well ordered families the men and maid servants never sit in the same apartment except during dinner.

In such families the men have a pint of ale each at dinner, and the women half a pint each. There are no families, except perhaps the very highest, in which wine is allowed to the upper servants.

The nurse-maids, again, have all their meals quite distinct from the other servants, and are in all respects completely separated from them.

Mrs. L.—In case of illness among our servants what ought we to do?

Mrs. B.—In illness, immediate attention and medical advice should be afforded to them, and the healthy servants, generally, should be encouraged to pay as much attention as their time will permit, to their invalid fellow-servants. Unless the state of the family and the nature of the disease peculiarly demand it, I think that it is cruel to send a sick servant either to poor, confined, and dirty lodgings, where poverty and misery stare him in the face, at the very moment he needs those comforts which his master's house might have afforded him, or to have him carried into an hospital, where, finding himself surrounded by fellow-sufferers, in various stages of disease and mortal decay, his heart sinks within him at the sight, and his recovery is, perhaps, retarded by the gloomy impression made on his mind. A little expense, a little inconvenience in the family, and a little feeling shown by a master or mistress to a sick servant, would generally be well bestowed, and might be equally well repaid by his future faithful services.

Mrs. L.—I am surprised to hear you hint any censure on hospitals; I have always thought that, in case of the illness of a domestic or of any poor neighbour, an hospital is the very best place to which he can be sent.

Mrs. B.—It is far from my intention to object to hospitals generally; on the contrary, there are many cases that could not receive the same degree of attention, or have such advantages in medical consultation, as in the hospitals, where also, I believe, great care is bestowed on the comfort of every patient, and convalescence is promoted by good nursing. But, by the observation I had previously made, I did not mean to extend the censure beyond the cases of servants who are, too frequently, sent from the habitations of splendour and luxury, into such dissimilar scenes; and sent, too, when their spirits are least able to endure the reverse. But while I recommend

kindness to be shown to your domestics during illness, I should not neglect to caution you against listening, too frequently, to all their little complaints. There is not, perhaps, any class of people more fanciful, or inclined to imagine themselves more-indisposed than they really are, as the one of which we are speaking. When a servant, however, falls into disease, the master is not only bound to see that he is properly attended and nursed; but the expense of such attendance is as much a debt of his own as the sums incurred for the maintenance of the servant. Refusing to display greater meanness than obliging a servant to defray the expense of medical attendance out of his own pocket.

MR. L.—Some indulgences should be, I suppose, occasionally allowed to servants independent of those which necessity demands.

MR. B.—Visiting their relations and friends now and then, but not too frequently, and only when it suits the convenience of the family, can scarcely be denied them; and I think it unfortunate that Sunday should be the most convenient day on which this indulgence is generally allowed them. It makes *that* a day of dissipation which ought at least to be one of rest; and by those who have no regard to the best interests of their fellow-creatures, it must be considered as the right season for encouraging their dependants habits of reflection and attention to their religious duties. If there is time to *visit*, there must also be time to attend public service; and if the preceding week has been spent in active employments, the mere exertion of the body, and the occupying the mind by suitable amusements, ought to be sufficient to make Sunday pass agreeably and peacefully. But, unhappily, one of two evils prevails in most families; either Sunday is the day on which company is invited, and the fatigue to the servants thereby increased, or it is rendered a time of emancipation from useful restraint. They exhaust their wages

in order to dress immoderately; they frequently fatigue themselves to such a degree, as to render them feeble and listless over the employments of the succeeding day; and rather than undergo the penance of a quiet day at home, I have known them expose themselves to such inclement weather that violent and serious colds have ensued. I cannot help wishing that the visiting of servants could be allowed on any other day, and that Sunday should become a day of rest:—that all worldly employments should be suspended as much as possible, and by an established routine, that every servant in each household should have the privilege of attending public worship, at least once, on that day. This would be a good rule for a young housekeeper to establish, yet I would not be so strict as to say it ought never to be broken, nor to deny a servant on any particular occasion to visit his friends on a Sunday. Good as the rule is, the breach of it, now and then, can do little harm; while too much strictness might disgust those whom we desire to encourage and establish in good habits.

Mrs. L.—One reason for permitting servants to visit their friends on Sunday rather than any other day may be owing to their friends being fully occupied with their labours throughout the week; and, consequently, unable to receive them except on Sunday.

Mrs. B.—There is much reason in your remark, which proves the necessity of submitting to circumstances when we cannot control them.

Mrs. L.—What inconveniences are likely to arise from permitting servants to receive the visits of their friends?

Mrs. B.—There are many; and these quite sufficient to induce the mistress of a family only to allow it in a very limited degree. To forbid it altogether is to tempt your servants to deceive you; and, therefore, I advise you to prohibit any visit beyond a call from their friends, unless they request your permission, upon the occasion of near relations coming to see them from a distance, to entertain

for a longer period. In some houses great inconvenience has been incurred from the negligent indulgence of the heads of the family on this point. Dishonest practices, to a great extent, have been carried on through the medium of the visitors of servants; for, in a large town, the character of each servant's connections can scarcely be known, and sometimes those are admitted into a house, who, from their practices, deserve nothing less than a jail. If this inconvenience did not exist, another of some importance to people of small fortune should not be forgotten, for, by permitting the unlimited visits of the friends of servants, the rapid consumption of some of the substantial articles of good cheer would be unnecessarily extravagant. This is, indeed, sufficient to warn the wary housekeeper against such indulgences.

Mrs. L.—Is not some greater indulgence to be allowed when a servant has proved his fidelity by many years' service?

Mrs. B.—That appears only reasonable, but I think no indulgence to such a servant should be of a different nature, or you will render the rest of your domestics envious and discontented; and yet a proper tribute of the approbation of his master and mistress should be bestowed on him in consideration of his fidelity. The best reward, perhaps, in a case of this kind, is a small sum deposited in the name of the servant in a savings' bank, which may serve as a nucleus, upon which he may accumulate future savings.

Mrs. L.—Would it not be desirable to restrain the love of dress in female servants?

Mrs. B.—Suitableness of dress, is a point on which the maid-servants require frequent admonition. The cheapness of the various articles of dress, affords them the means of gratifying their vanity; and it seems incumbent on mistresses to point out to them how injurious this vanity is to their best interests: how it prevents their being able

to accumulate even a small sum, by which their prospects in after life might be improved ; and how much better they would appear in a dress proper for their station and employments, than in one which only betrays a vain attempt to imitate their superiors, and which, after all, renders vulgarity only more obvious. Cleanliness and neatness, however, should be enforced.

Mrs. L.—What do you consider an appropriate dress for female servants ?

Mrs. B.—This inquiry embraces two considerations : the first, concerning the material ; the second, the form or style of dress appropriate for female domestics. With regard to the first, I should say that silk and muslin gowns, lace trimmings, worked muslin, silk stockings, and silk aprons, are all imitations of those above their own rank, which should be discouraged, if not positively forbidden in our attendants. Equally unsuitable are feathers, flowers, lace-caps, ear-rings, and neck-laces. With respect to the second, I am of opinion, that all ornamental appendages to that attire which is intended for utility chiefly, are improper in a female domestic. Perhaps these observations may not be requisite for the guidance of those who know the world well ; but a young mistress should be informed that the female domestic who wishes to render her person particularly attractive, or her dress fashionable, is a dangerous inmate ; and cannot be supposed to have her mind sufficiently engrossed in her duties to perform them faithfully. Yet I would by no means infer that it is not desirable to women, in every scale of society, to cherish some pride of appearance ; the desire of being neatly, and even tastefully attired, is as natural and commendable in the humble servant, as in the more distinguished members of society. The notion that it does not signify how negligent or unbecoming their garments may be, would introduce slovenliness and uncleanness around us : but to this the domestics of the present day are less inclined than

to an expenditure more profuse than their means, on the luxuries, instead of the necessities of dress. It becomes, then, the duty of every mistress, to point out to her female servants the propriety of plainness in their habiliments; and, if her instructions be not regarded, to make extravagance, in this respect, a serious objection to retaining them in her service. The head of a family who engages a female servant without warning her of her disapprobation of unsuitable dress, cannot be surprised if her servants should take advantage of her indifference and omission. A few hints, delivered in a kind, and not peremptory manner, might suggest to a female servant that the following materials of dress are the most suitable to her situation, and only can be permitted. Muslin, not lace-caps; cotton and stuff gowns, and petticoats of the same texture; shawls of a durable, but not of a brilliant colour; and bo nets of straw, which may be cleaned and turned. Occasional commendations of a simple, yet creditable style of dress, may be, in many instances, extremely useful, as our inferiors sometimes place great value on such proofs of approbation.

Mrs. L.—What wages are usually given to servants?

Mrs. B.—Wages vary in different places. The more remote a place is from the metropolis, the more moderate are the expenses of housekeeping in all its departments. Thus it is with wages in the north of England: they are at the rate only of half of those given in town, and in the counties adjoining. In some families, too, there is a standard of wages observed which is never departed from.

Wages should be sufficient to allow for decent clothing, and for the laying by of a small sum yearly. This last habit I advise you to recommend, and even in some degree to enforce on your servants; and the facilities for doing so are now found in every part of the country, in the establishments named Savings' Banks.

Mrs. L.—Would you permit your servants to receive presents from friends visiting at your house?

Mrs. B.—It is not a pleasant idea that our friends should pay for the few attentions and services they may receive under our roof. I am happy to find it is a custom growing into disuse, and is actually prohibited in many houses, where the servants would instantly lose their places, if they were known to receive vails (as such gratuities are called). It never does any good to the servants themselves; indeed it has a tendency, by giving them the power, to increase their extravagant inclinations. It may be extremely difficult to check the practice at once; but the reform might be accomplished by a small addition to wages, given on the express condition that no vails shall be taken. This would be equally beneficial to the master or the mistress, and to the servant: for the former would find that they were actually paying less money, although it were given to their own servants in the form of wages; and the latter, by receiving the additional sum as wages, would be more disposed to save the money thus received, than that which he has been accustomed to regard altogether as a superfluity.

Vails are objectionable, also, inasmuch as they regulate the comfort and convenience of the friends who visit you; by the extent of their purse, and their inclination to reward your servants. Thus an individual who is not rich, or who refrains from bribing servants to do their duty, may be rendered so uncomfortable in his visits to you, as to decline future invitations; and thus the cupidity of your servants, and the existence of a bad custom, will deprive you of the society of a friend whom you highly esteem.*

Mrs. L.—What is the best method of hiring servants? Should we apply at register offices?†

* Presents of this kind to servants are highly objectional, and should not be allowed or encouraged.—*Amer. Ed.*

† Intelligence or Register Offices were in bad repute a few years since,

Ms. B.—I do not think these offices are generally
 ted to by the best description of servants ; nor have
 servants any occasion to have recourse to such places,
 they are in want of situations. Their character is
 icient advertisement for them, and they seldom remain
 out of service. It is better to inquire for them, either
 g your circle of friends and acquaintance, or from
 respectable tradespeople you may employ, who ge-
 ly know those in their neighbourhood who are out of
 ; and when your wants are made known, you will
 applicants enough. The great object with you, should
 o have servants who have lived in respectable and
 ar families ; and whose habits have been so well
 ed, that they may have but few that require im-
 ement.

ere is in London a benevolent institution (under
 y respectable patronage), the object of which is to
 the exertions of meritorious servants ; when suffering
 illness to afford them temporary relief, and in old age
 ovide a small annuity for them. At the institution a
 ter is kept, and those who enter their names leave
 ddress of their references also : the secretary under-
 s to investigate into their characters and qualifica-
 , and, if unobjectionable, to provide places for them.
 cribers of one guinea per annum only have servants
 this institution. They have also a vote annually for
 relief of any deserving object.*

w-York, but their character has since improved, as they are now
 ed to take out a license, and are under the supervision of the Corpo-
 —Am. Ed.

he difficulty of procuring good servants, and the impositions practised
 keepers of former Intelligence Offices, caused the origin in New-York
 "The Society for the Encouragement of Faithful Domestic Servants,"
 has been in operation about three years, and has had a salutary effect
 the community. It is worthy of imitation and encouragement. The
 ing are the

Do not accept a written character from an unknown quarter, but seek an interview, if possible, with the former

RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE SOCIETY.

I. This Society shall be styled "*The Society for the Encouragement of Faithful Domestic Servants.*"

II. The Officers of the Society shall consist of a President, a Vice-President, and eight Managers, being subscribers, who shall be chosen by ballot at the general meetings. It shall be the duty of the President, or, in his absence, of the Vice-President, to preside at the meetings of the Society. The Managers shall have power to supply vacancies in their own body, till the next general meeting after such vacancy has occurred: they shall have charge of the concerns of the Society, shall appoint from their number their Secretary and Treasurer, and shall lay before the Society, at each general meeting, a report of their proceedings.

III. The Managers shall appoint an agent to keep, in a central part of the city, the Register Office of the Society; and shall, from time to time, give him such directions as they may deem necessary. They are empowered to regulate his salary, and his hours of attendance; to remove him for misconduct, and to appoint a successor.

IV. No fee or gratuity is to be received from servants, on any pretence.

V. Servants who are desirous of having their names registered must produce *satisfactory evidence* of their *good character*, and of their respective *qualifications*; and the agent shall, *on no condition*, register the name of a servant who cannot produce such testimonials.

VI. If any servant shall present a forged recommendation, or a recommendation that has been granted to another servant, the Managers are empowered to advertise his or her name in the newspapers.

VII. The Managers shall appoint a board of Patronesses, of sixteen ladies, being subscribers, who shall be requested to visit, by turns, the Office of the Society, *at least once in each week*, during the hours of business, to make their observations upon its management, and to communicate, by report, their suggestions to the Board of Managers.

VIII. Any person who shall pay five dollars in advance shall be a member of this Society for one year, and may apply for servants as often as they may have occasion for them, with the additional privilege of nominating *one* servant who shall be entitled to the gratuities hereafter mentioned. But the name of such servant must be recorded at the Office *one year before any premium can be given*. A *certificate* of this record is requisite, and will be furnished by the agent. Every additional servant so nominated, must be paid for at the same rate.

IX. The current year shall commence on the 1st of January, and all subscriptions shall take date on the quarter-day preceding the day of subscription.

X. No person, except members, shall have access to the Register, or be furnished with a servant from the Office: and no subscriber shall be permitted to apply for a servant *for another person, who is not a member*.

press of the servant whom you are about to engage.
In her appearance, and the state of her house, you may

Any subscriber who may give a *false, or grossly defective statement* character of a servant, or who may be *guilty of enticing or inveigling a servant from any other person*, whether a member of this Society or who shall be convicted of treating servants harshly or unjustly, shall be excluded from this Society by the Managers.

Every servant, over 15 years of age, having been nominated on the Society's books one year, and having so long lived with the same subscriber, or she personally attend the next quarterly, or other subsequent quarterly distribution of the gratuities, bringing with them the certificate of their nomination, and a letter of recommendation from the subscriber, certifying her good conduct and continuance in the same service, shall receive a new octavo Bible, or (having one,) in lieu thereof \$2 00

at the end of 2 years	3 00
3 do.	5 00
4 do.	7 00
5 do. (and a certificate of their good services for that year)	10 00

\$27 00

At the completion of every year thereafter, *ten dollars*.

Any servant, who shall have received, after this time, a five years' certificate from the Society, and shall, at a future period of life, become incapacitated for service, or indigent, may be annually assisted by the Managers, on the recommendation of the Board of Patronesses, with a gratuity, not exceeding *ten dollars*.

If any female servant who has obtained a five years' certificate, shall marry from and leave the same service, she shall be entitled, on her departure, to receive a gratuity from the Managers, not exceeding *ten dollars*.

The Managers, in addition to the premiums they may award, shall from any unappropriated funds of the Society, to each person who shall obtain a five years' certificate, a premium of *one per centum* on all the balances they then at their credit in the Savings Bank, the Bank books to be presented to the Managers.

If any subscription is not renewed and paid within three months after expiration of the last, such default shall be considered as an intention to discontinue the subscription, and the servant or servants of such subscriber, when nominated, shall not have a claim to any gratuity from this Society.

The Managers shall meet for the distribution of premiums, and business of the Society, on the first Thursday in January, April, July, and October, at their office, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, and shall have the power to call general meetings of the subscribers, when it shall appear proper. The names of the servants who receive premiums, shall be printed in the next succeeding report.

draw some inference to assist your decision of the suitability of the servant for your place. If the lady's personal appearance betray negligence, or her house untidiness and want of cleanliness, you may naturally conclude that her servant may have similar defects, which, with your habits, and notions, would render her unfit for your service. Of late years the love of change has been an increasing evil among our domestics ; it is an evil that affects their welfare, as much as it does the comfort of those they serve ; nor is it easy to say how this may be counteracted ; Perhaps, if every mistress of a family endeavoured to instil into her servants an honest pride at having been able to retain their places for several years, it might have some good effect. Or were they entitled to a trifling premium, or increased wages, after having lived a stated period in one family, this weak and (to them) ruinous propensity might, in time, be conquered.

MRS. L.—If I wish to apply personally for the character of a servant, what course am I to pursue ?

MRS. B.—You must desire the servant to wait upon her former mistress, and request her to appoint a time, convenient to herself, when you may call upon her. This little observance is necessary to prevent any unseasonable intrusion on the part of a stranger. Your investigation should, of course, commence with strict inquiries respecting the morals of the servant you are about to engage ; if no objection arise on that score, her qualifications for the place she will have to fill are then to be examined. Let your inquiries be minute, that you may, if possible, avoid the disappointment and trouble that an indifferent servant may cause you.

And when you have, in your turn, to give a character, remember that it is of great moment to be just. Do not suffer your feelings to induce you to recommend to another, a servant you would not retain yourself. You do not in the end benefit the servant, because she is not likely to

and those failings in which you thus suffer her to in-
 e with impunity; and while you show her this mis-
 kindness, you commit an act of injustice towards
 lady to whom you recommend her. On the other
 , it cannot be necessary for me to caution you against
 influence of angry feelings towards a servant with whom
 have parted, when called upon to give her a character.
 feelings, I am assured, would not induce you to say
 word more or less than the exact truth, by which she
 t to abide.

rs. L.—I think I have heard that the law will redress
 injury caused by a false character, whether it affect
 servant, or the person who receives the character. It
 d not be a trifling disgrace, I think, to be thus called
 account.

rs. B.—It is a very proper security for both parties,
 one so little enforced, that I am afraid it will soon be-
 e unknown.

any servants have an opinion that their employers are
 d, under all circumstances, to give them such a cha-
 r as will secure them a new situation; and this absur-
 is, in some degree, countenanced by the practice,
 h many well-meaning but weak people have, in
 g characters, of concealing very material faults in
 servants who are leaving them, unless they be ex-
 ly interrogated on these particular points. Nothing
 e more prejudicial to the interest of servants, as well
 ose who employ them, than such a custom; and were
 nts convinced that correct characters would always
 ven, the certainty of their misconduct operating as an
 cle to their obtaining new situations, would have a
 erful influence in regulating their behaviour; and
 d ultimately produce in them an honest interest in
 ncerns of their employers. A strictly true character
 d always be given; and by this we ought to under-
 an account both of the good qualities and the fail-

ings of the servants ; for, although this may occasionally appear severe and illiberal, and may, undoubtedly, in a few instances, prove ruinous to individuals, yet, its good effects would soon be conspicuous in the conduct of servants ; and, consequently, cease to possess any feature of harshness.

And now let me beg you to consider, how your example will influence all around you. Your servants will naturally fix their attention upon you, as the mistress of the house ; and if they perceive that your conduct is regulated by strict principles of religion and morality, they cannot fail to respect you ; if, also, they have reason to know that your temper is well regulated, and that you have a benevolent desire to promote their comfort, while you only exact from them a steady performance of their duty, their respect for you will be mingled with affection, and solicitude to deserve your favour. The most unprincipled among them will be influenced by such an example, although that influence may not produce an entire reformation. The regulations you will think proper to prescribe for the preservation of order and morality among your domestics, must be enforced by your own example, or they will have little or no effect. In vain will you command them to rest on the Sabbath, if you make it a day of dissipation ; and in vain forbid the practice of any impropriety of conduct, if you, or other inmates of your household, are not yourselves as strict on every point.

Mrs. L.—I hear it frequently remarked that servants of the present day are in every respect inferior to those of the preceding generation : and many consider this as occasioned by the education now generally given to them. Are you of this opinion ?

Mrs. B.—In many respects they are certainly changed ; they have, as we have before remarked, a greater love of dress, and desire of frequent change of place, and they seem less capable of that strong attachment to those they

ve, than the servants of former days appear to have
en, whose fidelity and attachment, we have heard,
uld often continue unchanged through every misfortune
l vicissitude in the lives of their masters. But granting
t these changes have taken place, I am afraid it is but
to throw some censure on the ladies of the present
e, who certainly do not bestow the same care and
ience, in forming their servants, that their predecessors
. I believe it to be most true, that good mistresses
ke good servants. Some ladies, too, from ignorance of
detail of household work, expect too much from their
nestics, which, of course, occasions discontent among
m. They should bear in mind Swift's humorous axiom,
ot to expect perfection for ten pounds a year."

With respect to the influence of education, I am of opi-
n, that no part of the inferiority of modern servants can
ascribed to it: for it is not very probable that education
uld produce on this class of the community, an effect
trary to that which follows its extension over the other
sses. Those who have traced, with the most accurate
e, the causes which have exerted a beneficial influence
mankind, have placed education as the most promi-
t; and it must be admitted, that an individual whose
ellect has been cultivated, and who can reason upon the
essity and propriety of the duties attached to the
ious ranks of society, is more likely to perform well
se which his situation exacts, than one who obeys from
tupid reverence of power, or a dread of punishment.
ave, generally, found that the best servants are those
o have had a superior education in their station of life;
y are respectful without being obsequious, modest in
ir demeanour, careful in their habits; and, as they can
culate and keep an account of their expenses, they are
most likely to be prudent and economical, from a de-
e to save a little from their wages for future exigencies.
m at a loss to conceive how it could ever be supposed

that those who can read and understand the moral precepts inculcated in the Scriptures, should be more immoral than those who are totally illiterate, and who can with difficulty comprehend the sacred volume, when it is read to them. A servant, who has a taste for reading, finds a rational pleasure in the indulgence of it during his leisure hours, which otherwise would be only filled up by sleeping, by idle gossiping, or sensual indulgence.

If, therefore, the observation that modern servants are inferior to their predecessors be correct, we must trace that evil to some other source than education : and I have no hesitation in referring it to the altered structure of society. For, if servants be less steady and more immoral than formerly, are not, I would ask, their employers equally so ? And, if masters and mistresses are not such regular and sedate characters as those of a prior age, is it not too much to expect that the inferiors, who are in immediate contact with them, and the witnesses of their conduct, should not become also loose and unsettled ? “ Like master, like man,” is a saying which originated from observing the influence of example ; and will, at all times, most probably, be verified by experience.

Mrs. L.—Will you tell me what are the qualifications requisite in a housekeeper ?

Mrs. B.—Trust-worthiness is an essential quality in a housekeeper ; but, if she be not as vigilant as she is honest, she cannot discharge her duty well. As she is the deputy of her mistress, she should endeavour to regard every thing around her with the keenness and interest of a principal, rather than with the indifference of a servant. She should be constantly on the alert in observing and detecting any thing wrong in the conduct of those under her. It is a part of her duty to see that each fulfils his or her share of the household employments, without appealing to the heads of the family ; unless she find her authority insufficient to check abuses, and to keep the whole in order.

She should be a good accountant ; having books in which she may note down strictly all the current expenses of the house, and which should be cast up weekly, in order to show them to her lady, and have them settled at a time convenient to her. She should have a book, also, in which those articles of housekeeping that are brought into the house and not immediately paid for should be entered. It is a satisfaction to a master and mistress that this book should be ready to compare with the accounts sent by the tradesmen.

It is her province to have the charge of the store-room, with the preserves, pickles, and confectionary, and to see that no waste take place in any thing intrusted to her. A clever housekeeper will be able to judge of the consumption which, from the size of the family she superintends, will necessarily take place in each article ; and when that quantity is exceeded, she will instantly try to discover the cause and to rectify it, if it proceed from any waste or carelessness of those under her superintendence.

It is absolutely necessary that she should understand the art of cooking, and every thing connected with it. It is true, there are houses in which professed cooks are kept ; but where this is not the case, it is necessary that the housekeeper should be well qualified to superintend the whole business of the kitchen. In most places the housekeeper has to prepare all the confectionary ; and how far she may be required to take an active part in the cooking, must depend on the qualifications of the cook under her. The housemaids, laundress, and dairy-maid, should also be under her eye, so that each should feel aware that her conduct is observed.

Even if you should be perfectly satisfied that your housekeeper is a woman of great integrity, you will still find it desirable to fix your eye constantly upon her, that her vigilance and integrity may not relax for want of this excitement. Symptoms of neglect on her part should never

be overlooked, as they would tend to throw the whole house into confusion and irregular habits.

Mrs. L.—Tell me what I should particularly require in a cook.

Mrs. B.—She should be healthy and strong, and particularly clean in her person. Her hands, though they may be rough from the nature of her employments, yet, should have a clean appearance. Her honesty and sobriety must be unquestionable, because in a house like yours there will be so many things tempting her to betray her trust ; and this she may do for a length of time without discovery.

I have no doubt that your kitchen is properly furnished with every utensil that your cook can require. She can neither be clean nor neat in her work, if she have not a sufficient number of saucepans, kettles, and a variety of other utensils, too numerous for me now to mention, but which must bear a proper proportion to the quantity of cooking which she has to perform. Roller towels, kitchen table-cloths, and towels, should be given out to her each week, in sufficient number, to afford her the means of being clean, without extravagance.

In those houses in which there is much cooking, and in large families, a kitchen-maid is generally kept, to whom devolves the preparing of the servants' meals, and the cleaning the kitchen and the various cooking utensils ; but, in smaller families, this additional servant is unnecessary, the work being easily performed by the cook.

Mrs. L.—I am desirous to learn the routine of each servant's duty, that I may be enabled to ascertain how far it is performed or omitted in my family. What are the duties of a cook ?

Mrs. B.—Your kitchen should be thoroughly cleaned twice during the week, and well swept each day : besides which, the broom and mop should always be at hand to remove any thing that may have fallen on the floor, while the business of cooking is going on. A dirty floor and

fire-place, unpolished utensils, with basins, jugs, or other articles left lying about, are symptoms of a slovenly cook, and are sufficient to excite suspicions of her nicety in things of greater importance to our comfort. The cleaning of the kitchen, pantry, passages, and kitchen stairs, should always be over before breakfast, that it may not interfere with the usual business of the day. If you have no housekeeper, you should yourself go, early in the day, into your kitchen, look around you, and see if all this has been properly done. You may be assured the eye of the mistress is most important, even if you find no cause for censure. You can then give your orders for the day, and inquire what is required from your store-room. The other servants should, also, come at the same time to ask for such things as they may need. When a lady is her own housekeeper, she may be teased by such applications all day long, unless she fix an hour at which all her domestics may apply to her.

But to return to the cook. After each day's cooking is over, the grate and hearth should be cleared, a small fire made up, and the boiler and kettle filled up and set on to boil. She should then, when there is no scullion, proceed to wash her dishes, having previously prepared two tubs, one with clean hot water, and the other with cold ; in which latter the plates and dishes should be well rinsed, before they are put into the rack to dry.

The saucepans and kettles which have been used should be then scoured, but not too roughly, either with wood ashes, or with fine sand, then well rinsed out, wiped dry, and turned down on a clean dry shelf. If tin saucepans are not well dried, they quickly rust, and are then spoiled. The upper rim of saucepans should be kept bright ; but the outside, where the fire reaches and burns, it is useless to attempt keeping bright ; and indeed the rubbing and scouring they would require, would soon wear them out. For the same reason, the saucepans should not be scoured with a very

heavy hand, which wears off the inside tinning without cleaning them the better.

Iron and tin saucepans are properly superseding the use of copper; for although metallic copper be not poisonous,* yet, if a copper vessel be left by a careless servant in a damp state exposed to the air, it cannot be used with safety until it be scoured. When copper pans are not well tinned, the verdigris, or rust of copper, very soon appears, and this is, as you know, highly poisonous; particularly, if any thing, in the smallest degree, be suffered to stand in it till it becomes cold.

When you are in the country, you will find your poor neighbours very thankful for the water in which meat has been boiled, which they will thicken with pease and other vegetables, and thus obtain from it a comfortable and nourishing meal. This your cook will, perhaps, consider as her perquisite, unless you make a point of reserving it for the use I have just mentioned. The value of it to the cook may not be even one penny, while to the poor it gives a portion of strength and comfort. If you desire it always to be poured into an earthen vessel kept for that purpose, and placed in your larder, you will then see it in your daily visits to your kitchen, and will be able to direct to whom it shall be given. It would greatly add to the benefit, if your cook were to prepare it, as the poor are very deficient in the art of cooking. In those families where economy is obliged to be studied (and in my opinion it should be studied even in affluent families, for waste and extravagance can in no case be excused), the broth which boiled meat has produced, is frequently thickened into soup for the servants' table. Good pease soup may also be made for the same use, from the bones of roast beef, and the bones of the legs and shoulders of

* For a curious illustration of this fact, see *Thomson's Conspectus of the Pharmacopœias*, art. *Cuprum*.

utton. Those which have been cut from meat before it was cooked, should be stewed down for gravy, which a clever cook will, by a little contrivance, have constantly at hand.*

There are very few cooks who are not extravagant in coals. A good fire is essential while cooking is going on, which may, perhaps, bring them into the habit of keeping a large one at other times of the day, and which every mistress or housekeeper should endeavour to prevent. Your cook should never suffer her fire to get very low; for she wastes both much coals and time by this negligence. A fire should be regularly supplied with coals, which would prevent it from ever being so smoky as to be unfit for use at a few minutes' notice; and it should be generally known that smoke is merely unconsumed coal: and if it get low, when any thing is required to be prepared quickly, the cook has no resource, but to apply the bellows furiously, so that, before the fire burns properly, much coal must have been wasted. The ashes should be riddled from the cinders, and these reserved to throw on the back of the kitchen fire, after cooking is over; or they will serve to burn in stoves and ovens, when once the fire under them has been lighted. When there is roasting going on, the meat-screen assists the fire, and prevents the necessity of having so large a one as it would require without a screen. Also, when boiling alone is going on, the fire need not be unusually large. Much was done by Count Rumford to improve fire-places, and economise fuel; and I recommend to your attention his essays on this subject. It is usual, but I do not think it a good plan, to allow the cook what are called perquisites:† dripping, for instance; if that be

* For some excellent recipes for economical broths, see *The Cook's Oracle*, chap. vii.

† In New-York, soap-fat and ashes are sometimes allowed as perquisites to servants, but for the reasons above stated, are to be deprecated and prevented. Soap-fat is made up of drippings, ends of tallow candles, and every greasy

allowed her, it tempts her, if she be avaricious, to roast the meat too dry, that it may yield her a larger quantity of dripping, which is nothing but the melted fat of the meat. Some cooks, also, have even been known to melt down butter, and the ends of candles, in order to add to these kitchen perquisites. Temptation, therefore, should be as much avoided as possible ; but where there is a dishonest spirit and a want of principle, no precautions will avail. Still, if allowing wages, equivalent to the value of these perquisites, would diminish the contest between honest and dishonest principles, how much better it would be, both for the mistress and her servant, if this part of her domestic economy were to vary from the general system ! While on this topic, I ought not to omit mentioning some other of the practices of which town servants are accused, in order that you may be on your guard, should you be so unlucky as to be the mistress of an unprincipled servant. As servants are supposed to influence their employers in directing their custom to any shop they please, the tradespeople find it, too often, for their interest to bribe them, either with Christmas-boxes, or to give them a discount upon the bills paid by their masters. It is well if this discount is not, in the first instance, drawn from the customer's purse, by some extra charge ; and thus a system of dishonesty carried on as detrimental to the morality of tradesman and servant, as to the interest of the customer. I have heard of servants following their masters to the shops, where they have been to liquidate a debt, and demanding the discount, which, if due to any one, the master should have had.

Sometimes, connivances have been discovered between petty tradespeople and servants, by which, articles that

article that can be collected about a house, and is a cash article with the collectors of soap-fat and ashes. This allowance is a temptation to waste and destroy, by throwing things into the tub of soap-fat. So also the ashes is a temptation to keep up a rousing fire, and consume wood for the sake of the *residuum*.—*Amer. Ed.*

er entered the house have been charged in the bills
e articles thus placed to the credit of the customer, are
anically termed "the dead man's portion;" and the
duce obtained is divided between the defrauding parties.
t is very unpleasant to entertain doubts as to the integ-
of those we employ about us, and on whom we must
essarily rely in some degree. The best check, how-
r, against these practices, is to permit your servants as
om as possible to have any thing to do with your bills,
to carry on all your dealings with your tradespeople
erson.

Also I recommend you to acquire as early as you can,
nowledge of the quantity which, of each of the common
cles of housekeeping, must necessarily be consumed
our family. When you have ascertained that, you
judge each week for yourself, whether dishonesty or
avagance has been practised in your house, always,
ever, taking into the account the circumstances of the
k, which may have increased this consumption.

Extravagance is frequently found accompanied by dis-
est intentions; proceeding chiefly from careless indif-
nce to the interest of master and mistress. From what-
e cause it proceed, vigilance is absolutely necessary,
er in the housekeeper or her mistress. It is part
he cook's duty to take such charge of meat, beer,
d, butter, cheese, and all the articles of common con-
ption, as shall prevent any degree of waste. Not the
t vigilant mistress or housekeeper can attend suffi-
tly to this point; the cook, therefore, must be in a
at measure responsible. The greatest check the mis-
s of a family can have over her cook, is to show her
she has a thorough knowledge of the quantity of
n article that must necessarily be consumed, according
he size of her family, and that when this quantity has
n exceeded, she expects to have it accounted for.
umulations of small pieces of bread ought never to

take place, with a clever cook, who will always insist upon having those fragments eaten by the servants before fresh pieces are cut from the loaf. When there are any pieces left, she can pour boiling milk over them, and prepare a common bread pudding for the early dinner. There is frequent waste in the consumption of beer, owing to too much of it being generally drawn at a time. When this happens to be the case, a thoughtful cook will remember that a crust of bread put into it, and the jug covered over, will, for a short time, prevent it from becoming very flat.

A good cook will always be careful that the spits are wiped clean while they are hot, and left ready for the next day's use. The jack should be oiled and cleaned occasionally, or the dust will clog the wheels, prevent it going well, and will make it necessary to have it taken down and more thoroughly cleaned. It is bad management in a cook ever to be without hot water; especially if she live in a family where there are young children, for whom it is in frequent, and, sometimes, immediate demand. The salt-box and candle-box should both be kept very clean. The former should be hung near the fire, as common salt attracts water from the air and dissolves; and the latter as far from the fire as it can be, in a dry place.

Silver spoons should never be used in the kitchen, unless for preparing preserves; wooden and iron spoons are as cleanly, and may be used without fear of scratching or bending them.

The cook should not permit the dust-hole to remain long without having it emptied, and no cabbage leaves or green vegetable matter should be allowed to be thrown into it. These soon ferment, and the sulphuretted hydrogen gas, which is extricated, causes an intolerable stench.

I am afraid you will think I am growing tedious, and that I have entered too much into detail.

Mrs. L.—On the contrary I am going to request you to

me as minute an account of the housemaid's duties as I am persuaded that information of the kind you give will enable me the better to direct the business of my household.

Ms. B.—A housemaid should be active, clean, and pleasing in her person; an early riser; of a respectful and steady deportment, and possessed of a temper that will not be easily ruffled. She must be able to see, without the appearance of discomposure, her labours often increased by the carelessness and thoughtlessness of others. A dirty foot will obtrude itself upon her clean floors; the well-polished furniture will demand her strength and patience, when spotted or soiled by some reckless person. These trials her temper should be equal to encounter, for they cannot always be averted.

The sitting rooms in daily use are first to be prepared. On entering the room, in the morning, the housemaid should immediately open the windows, to admit the fresh air. She should then remove the fender and rug from the fireplace, and cover, with a coarse cloth, the marble top, while the ashes and cinders are collected together and removed. The grate and fire-irons are afterwards to be carefully cleaned. If the grate have bright bars, it should be rubbed with fine emery paper, which will remove the burnt appearance of the bars. Fine polished iron-irons, if not suffered to rust, will only require to be rubbed with a leather; when, however, there is unfortunately any appearance of rust upon them, it must be removed, either with fine emery paper, or with a little fine powder rubbed on the rusty part; but, if emery paper be employed, this must be done with care, or the iron will be scratched. I have seen the white ashes, which result from burning Staffordshire coals, employed for this purpose; and from their softness they appear to answer the intention better than any of the other articles which are commonly used.

The carpet should be swept with the carpet broom, not oftener than once a week, as more frequent use of the broom would wear the carpet too fast; but, each day, it should be swept with a good hair broom, after it has been sprinkled with moist tea leaves. I ought to mention that sofas, and any other nice furniture, should be covered over with a large calico cloth, kept for that purpose, before the sweeping commences; and window-curtains should be hung up as high as they can be out of the way of the dust. After the carpet is swept, the dust must be removed, either with a soft round brush, or with a very clean linen duster, from the panels of the doors, the windows and window-frames, ledges, and skirting boards. The frames of pictures and looking-glasses should never be touched with linen, but the dust should be cleared from them with a painter's brush, or a bunch of feathers. Where footmen are kept, the charge of rubbing mahogany furniture devolves on them, otherwise it becomes the care of the housemaid. The chairs and tables should be rubbed well every day; and on the mahogany tables a little cold drawn linseed oil should be rubbed in once or twice a week, which will, in time, give them a durable varnish, such as will prevent their being spotted or injured by being accidentally wetted. The Italians, after thus saturating the surface with oil, apply a solution of gum arabic in boiling spirit of wine. Bees-wax should not be used, as it gives a disagreeable stickiness to every thing, and ultimately becomes opaque. When there are any spots or stains upon a table, they must be washed off with warm water before the oil is put on.

The chimney-ornaments, glass-lustres, or china, should be very carefully removed while the mantel-piece is either washed or dusted; and as the housemaid replaces them, she should, with a clean duster, wipe them free from the dust. The window-curtains are then to be dusted with a feather broom, and properly replaced on the hook.

ut once a week the sills of the windows should be
hed with soap and water, and the windows cleaned
the dust every where within reach.

he stairs and stair-carpet should next be swept down,
me will allow of this duty before breakfast, as it is not
pleasant thing to be done when the family are moving
it. And whenever good opportunities occur, such as
chief part of the family being absent from home for a
hours, the housemaid should avail herself of these to
the stair carpets up, and have them well beaten and
en, while she scours the stairs down, and rubs the
s wires bright. The wainscot-board should also be
ed, and the banisters and hand-rail well rubbed.

as soon as the different members of the family are as
bled at breakfast, the housemaid should repair to the
chambers, open the windows (unless the weather be
p), draw the curtains up to the head of the bed, throw
ed-clothes upon two chairs placed at the foot of each
and leave the feather-beds open to the air. When
has been done in all the rooms in use, she should then
her chamber-bucket, with a jug of hot water, and
the proper towels, empty and clean out all the cham-
essels in each room, and then instantly carry off, empty,
wash out the bucket, and turn it down in some appro-
e place, that the water may completely run off from
When quite dry, she will, of course, carry it to the
t appointed for her use, in which she keeps her
ms, brushes, and the rest of her cleaning apparatus.

he should next carry water-jugs, one with soft water,
another with pump-water, into every bed-room, and
he water-ewers and decanters. The towels should be
before an open window to dry, or be changed; and
washing table put into complete order. The beds,
h during this time have been left exposed to the air,
now to be made, and in this another of the female
nts should be appointed to help her, as the feather-

beds cannot be well shaken, or the mattresses turned, by one person. It is very necessary that feather-beds should be well shaken, or the feathers will knot together, and render the bed hard and uncomfortable. Once or twice a week the paillasses should be turned, and every day the flock-mattresses and the beds. The sacking-cloth and bedstead should be dusted occasionally. It is necessary to remind those who are called from other household work to assist in making the beds, that they should previously wash their hands, as nothing looks more untidy or disgusting, than the marks of dirty fingers upon the bed-hangings, sheets, or counterpanes. With cleanly servants this can seldom occur. The beds being made, the curtains are to be shaken and laid upon the bolster, and a large calico coverlet should be thrown over the whole, and coarse towels over the washing and dressing-tables. If the bed-carpets are small and loose, they should be taken up before the beds are made; but if they are fastened down, which is very customary now, damp tea-leaves should be strewed over them previous to their being swept with a stout hair brush. After the room is swept, a damp mop or flannel, passed under the beds, the chests of drawers and wardrobes collect the flue and dust, and this I recommend to be done every day, as the best mode of keeping bed-rooms free from troublesome insects of every kind. A clean mop should belong to the housemaid for this purpose. Nothing betrays an untidy housemaid more than the flue being suffered to accumulate beneath the beds. After the room is swept, the ledges, panels of doors, and window-frames are all to be dusted, and the furniture rubbed and dusted. Twice during the week bed-room carpets should be taken up and shaken, and the floors under them swept free from dust, and occasionally scoured. In the country, scouring is not so frequently done as in town, but the floors are oftener dry-rubbed; and in my opinion frequent scouring might be avoided if

housemaids would bestow more pains in sweeping, rubbing, and dusting. In winter, a bed-room should be scoured, unless the weather be mild and dry, for fog is so likely to injure health as damp in a bed-room. When as a housemaid thinks she has finished a room, she should look around her, and examine if she has omitted anything, which will show care and attention, and prevent the mistress from being obliged to call her up, to admonish her of any neglect. During the winter, when there are fires in the bed-rooms, the housemaid should, before sweeping the room, collect and carry away the ashes, clean the grate and fire-irons, and lay, with small pieces of wood, a fire, ready to be lighted either before dinner or at tea, according to orders. While the family are at dinner, the housemaid should again repair to the dressing and bed-rooms, to put in order those things which have been used and disarranged at the dressing hour. Between the time of her own dinner and tea, she ought to be employed in mending, perhaps in repairing the household linen, or in any other duty appointed for her. Early in the evening the beds should be turned down, the windows shut, the curtains drawn, the fires, if required, lighted, and the rooms all aired for the night.

Q. L.—Who has usually the charge of the household?

A. B.—This devolves on the housekeeper generally, but in small families the housemaids have the care of it. When linen is sent to be washed, it should be examined, and if any part require to be repaired, it should be kept back. The housemaid should keep an account of the number of articles that are sent to the laundry, and count them on their return, to see that all are right, and well mended; and should replace them in the linen-press. In changing by the fresh-washed linen, care should be taken to replace it so that the whole stock may come into use in regular succession, by placing it, for instance, under the

rest of the linen, or at the back of the press. If the linen be put damp into the linen-closet, it will be mildewed, and stains produced which cannot easily be removed. A good housemaid will manage her work in so methodical a manner, that she will never either feel or appear to be hurried. Every day in the week will have its allotted portion of the weekly cleaning; by which means no one day will be surcharged with work, so as to occasion bustle or annoyance in the family. The drawing-room, the dining-room, and the library, she should contrive to clean thoroughly at those times in which the family are absent.

Mrs. L.—I am looking out for a good laundry-maid; what ought I to require from her?

Mrs. B.—I would certainly advise you to procure one who has been accustomed to the business of the laundry, as that is not a department which you can yourself superintend; nor can a housekeeper do so to any great extent, without neglecting some of her other avocations. Your eyes will quickly tell you if she wash the linen clean, and get up fine muslin tolerably well. If this should not be the case, you must, certainly, notice it directly, or the colour of your linen will be injured.

One thing you must remember, that your laundry should have every convenience to facilitate the work. The wash-house should be well supplied with soft water, boilers, and tubs. A washing machine saves labour, but I believe that the clothes are not so well washed as by the hand; and some imagine that it wears out the linen, and tears it. In the laundry there should be a good stove (for the double purpose of heating the irons and airing the linen), and also a mangle.

Muslins and light things should be washed in clean water, as their colour cannot be preserved if any other apparel have been, previously, washed in the water. I am convinced that the laundry-maid would much more easily preserve the good colour of her linen, and even

her own hands, if she changed the water more frequently, although it might occasion a greater expenditure of soap. Flannels are sometimes washed in cold water, and with ox or sheep gall ; but this is the old-fashioned way, and many ladies now prefer to have them washed in hot water. The colour of flannel is entirely lost when washed in water in which any thing else has been previously rinsed.*

Besides the essential articles of soap, blue, and starch, a laundry-maid should always have a supply of salt of tartre, *citrate of potass*, and bleaching liquid, with which to remove inkspots, iron-moulds, or other stains from the linen before it is washed.

The quantity of soap used in a week's wash may be estimated at the rate of half a pound per head ; which allows for the washing of the household linen as well. The quantity of starch depends, of course, upon the number of pieces to be starched. Sometimes it is fashionable to starch muslin dresses starched ; and when table linen is old and yellowed, a little starch improves their appearance, by giving them something of the consistency of new linen.

Some laundry-maids are so careless as to tear the linen while boiling, making use of any rough stick they can find ; and, also, sometimes to permit the water in the copper to get very low, by which means the linen is liable to be scorched by the fire. Such negligence should always be reprov'd. Soap is an article very easily mismanaged by a careless servant, and it requires some vigilance, either in the housekeeper or in the mistress of a family, to prevent it. When the quantity used weekly has been ascertained, it should be weighed out for each week, nor should the laundry-maid be permitted to

When, from frequent washings, flannels have lost their colour, it may be restored by fumigating them with sulphur. An easy way to do this is to place burning sulphur under an inverted basket, over which the flannels are

exceed it, without some apparent reason being given for the additional consumption.

Small coal and cinders will serve as fuel for stoves and coppers, after they are well lighted.

Horse-hair lines for hanging out the linen should be taken down when not in constant use, and before they are again put up they should be wiped very clean.

Mrs. L.—The servant whose character and qualifications are of the greatest importance, in a family where there are children, is certainly the nurse-maid. Far removed as my nursery-days, in many particulars, are from my recollection, I can still remember the anxiety which arose to my parents, and the sufferings of the children, from the great defects of the nursery-attendants,—sometimes from their mismanagement, and sometimes from the peculiarities of their tempers.

I request you to give me your opinion of the chief qualifications which ought to be required in a nurse-maid.

Mrs. B.—I am afraid it is not very usual to examine so strictly into the requisites for a good nurse-maid, as it is to ascertain those of servants in other departments ; yet I concur in your opinion, and think that the chief attention of a parent ought to be given to the character and general conduct of the person to whom she intrusts her children, rather than to the examination of the various perfections of her cook and footman. There is, however, much more care and attention paid to the duties of the nursery in this age, than in any preceding one, for which modern mothers deserve commendation, even if they do not always discover judgment in proportion to their solicitude.

Were I at this moment selecting a nurse-maid, I would endeavour to find a woman of about five or six and twenty years of age. If she be younger, she may be deficient in thoughtfulness and care, and, if older, in activity and good humour. Servants, from being, early in life, put to laborious employments, may be said to be at maturity much

er than females of a higher rank and of more sedentary employments. I have known maid-servants of not more than thirty years of age, who, from their want of activity and vigour, one would have guessed to be upwards of fifty.

person I would have my nurse-maid middle-sized, plump, and not inclined to be fat, of a healthy complexion, and cheerful countenance; I should without doubt prefer having one who had any striking peculiarity or defect in her person; for instance, any nervous motion of the features, a cast of the eye, or any bodily deformity. If the moral principles of a nurse-maid be fixed, I would not consider beauty as a valuable property; for I have remarked that children are such imitative beings that they naturally acquire some resemblance to those with whom they always associate; and I consider that beauty of person when united with rectitude of conduct, constitutes the perfection of the human species. The general health of a nurse-maid should be good; consumptive tendencies are particularly objectionable; and rheumatic complaints and constitutional head-aches are troublesome, and must give uneasiness to those who are subject to them, not only for the sake of the being, but generally, of that cheerful state of spirits which would induce them to be lively and active with the children whom they may have in charge.

It is scarcely necessary to speak of the much greater importance of good morals in a nurse-maid than any other qualification whatsoever. What irreparable mischief may be done to the infant-conscience by the tutorage and influence of a specious, deceptive woman? She may pervert the mind and control the conduct of her nurslings for a length of time, without exciting the suspicions of a vigilant parent, who, deluded into security by appearances, fancies she possesses in her nurse a treasure of great value, until some circumstance occurs, which re-

moves the film from her eyes, and turns them with painful conviction upon the havoc around her.

Mrs. L.—My own experience tells me that the truth of your representation cannot be doubted. I can remember many events in my childhood, which arose from the disingenuousness practised and inculcated by our nurse. I hope, however, the effects have not been, in our case, lasting, although there be lamentable instances of its consequences in others. Do you not think that deceit is a less common failing among servants of this day than it was formerly, when less attention was paid to their religious education?

Mrs. B.—There is less ignorance among them, and they are become thereby more aware of the advantages they themselves derive from an adherence to truth. I wish I could believe that a worthier principle more generally actuated them. For such as it is, however, we have reason to rejoice, as it lessens the probability of evils springing from hypocrisy in our nurseries.

Some failings are, certainly, increased among the present generation of servants, but I agree with you in thinking deceit less common than formerly. Neither do I think that sobriety is so frequently wanting in women servants as it used to be; yet, as I have heard of some instances of flagrant inebriety among them, it is as well to be on our guard against it. One lady, with whom I am acquainted, had a favourite nurse for eight years, who, about the end of that time, she discovered, was addicted to drinking; and had been in the daily habit, when walking out with the children, of calling at a house in which she could procure spirits. What the children had heard or seen in this haunt of vice was a cause of painful anxiety to the astonished mother; and it was long before she could again suffer them to be out of her sight. Another lady, upon hearing her baby cry, unusually long, in the middle of the

went into her nursery, and found her nurse lying on the floor in the stupor of intoxication.

Honesty is such an essential requisite in every domestic, that it seems scarcely necessary to mention it. Every nurse will be cautious upon a point of character, which will affect the security of his property. But having heard it stated, that the example of petty pilfering, in early life may have been the origin of that singular inclination to theft, which has now and then occurred in individuals of rank and affluence, from whom the common causes of dishonesty seemed far removed, I am unwilling to omit mentioning any point which may tend to increase your caution regarding the honesty of a nurse-maid, and to render your investigation as strict as possible. General cleanliness and propriety of conduct are also indispen-

sides these good qualities, your nurse-maid should be active, not a heavy sleeper, and a tolerably early riser.

She should be particularly cleanly in her person, washing herself almost as frequently as she washes the children. She should be a good needle-woman, and take pleasure in seeing her little charges neat in their dress ; and as much so as is consistent with the active sports in which they should be encouraged to delight. She ought to be fond of visiting, and should content herself with short portions of time for relaxation as may be convenient to her mistress, and compatible with the duties of the nursery. A kind heart, and a capability of attaching herself to the little dependants on her care and attention, should be among the ingredients which compose her character, and by which she will be enabled to undergo with patient endurance and unremitting attention the fatigue, day and night, which must frequently be her portion when involved in the arduous task of rearing the tender infant, or in attending it through the various diseases incidental to early life.

Mrs. L.—One possessed of so many good qualities will not easily be found. Would you, upon discovering deficiencies, immediately part with a servant ?

Mrs. B.—By no means, until you have tried to improve her. Your own observation and care may prevent much of the inconvenience which might arise from the attempted improvement ; and, even with the best servant, this kind of vigilance must be employed. Servants are accustomed, from the moment they enter into service, to be superintended, nor do they ever continue long in a right course without it. If, however, after a sufficient trial, you find a servant unimprovable, it will, of course, be advisable to part with her ; giving her that length of notice to which you agreed when you hired her.

Mrs. L.—Do not the duties of a footman vary in different families ?

Mrs. B.—They must necessarily vary according to the size and rank in society of the family into which the individual enters. In small families, where, perhaps, only one is kept, his morning employments commence with the rougher part of the work of his department, such as cleaning knives, forks, and shoes, brushing clothes, and assisting the house-maid to rub the mahogany, or other polished furniture in the libraries, and the dining and drawing rooms.

He has then to prepare for the breakfast-hour, by washing and cleaning himself, laying the cloth, and placing every thing in readiness on the breakfast-table ; seeing that the water is on the fire in proper time, that no delay may arise, on his part, when the family assemble in the breakfast-room. To keep the plate in good order, to wash the china and glass well, making the latter as bright and clear as possible ; to wash and wipe clean the handles of knives and forks ; to fold up and put away from the dust the breakfast-cloth which is in use, are the employments that generally occupy the morning hours of the footman ; while

holds himself in readiness to answer bells, and to open all-door.

Sitting well at table is, also, an important part of his employment. He should be in the daily habit of laying dinner-cloth neatly, and in good time ; placing for each a knife, fork, spoon, plate, and napkin ; a tumbler, a glass, and a chair. When there is soup, a soup-plate should be placed upon the other plate ; but this, of course, must not be put on the table until the dinner is ready to be served, or it will be cold. When the dinner is served at the table, he should announce it to the family, and hold himself in readiness by the sideboard until they have seated themselves. Then he should be all attention ; but quiet ; be ready to hand every plate in turn, and change it as soon as required. Bread, wine, or anything when handed round, should be presented with the right hand and upon the left side of the person served ; and anything should be handed on a waiter. He should be careful never to reach across a table, nor to put his hand before any one. He should tread lightly, make as little noise as he can whilst changing plates or other things, and not speak too loud when answering a question.

Between the courses the crumbs should be cleared away, by a napkin or a brush, into a clean plate. After dinner is over, and the table cleared of every thing upon it, the table-cloth must be lightly thrown together and rolled off, until a convenient opportunity occur for shaking the crumbs out of it and folding it up. This should be done as soon as possible, lest the cloth acquire a rumpled and untidy appearance. It is desirable to have in the kitchen or pantry a table-cloth press, into which the cloths may be put as soon as they are folded, and which, when tightly screwed down, keeps them uncrumpled.

When the task of cleaning the knives and forks is part of the business of the footman, he should, as soon as possible after they have been used, put them into warm water

(*hot* water will unsolder the blades from the handles), and wipe them dry: they will then remain without injury in the proper tray till the usual time of cleaning them.

A willow or an ash board, with a piece of buck-leather nailed upon it, and Bath-brick dust, will be necessary to enable him to clean and brighten them well. The brick dust should be wiped clean off with a coarse knife-cloth, and the handles, whether of bone or of ivory, should be dipped into warm water, or washed with a soaped flannel, and wiped clean and dry. Nothing can be more disagreeable, either to the sight or the touch, than carelessly cleaned knives and forks, and the footman should be spoken to whenever he remits his attention to this nicety. Silver handles should be cleaned with hartshorn powder, and rubbed with a leather; the plate-brush will remove any of the powder that may lodge either in the chased part or in ciphers and crests. Ebony-handles require to be wiped with a piece of linen dipped in oil, which must be cleaned away with another cloth.

The pantry, which contains the glass, china, and all the various articles which belong to the footman's province, should be properly furnished for him, with shelves, hooks, drawers lined with green baize for the plate, and small wooden tubs or bowls for washing glass and china. He should have two large pieces of leather for his plate, and two smaller for the candlesticks and snuffers. He should, according to the size of the family, be allowed a sufficient number of glass, tea, and knife-cloths, each week; a towel, a bowl, and a piece of soap, to enable him to wash his hands very frequently. A good steady servant will keep his clothes and person clean and neat: he will be particularly careful in washing his hands, being called upon constantly to wait and hand about so many various things. In many families the footman is, very properly, not allowed to deliver any small thing, not even a card or a letter, except on a waiter; and this custom, independent of its

anliness, begets respect, and displays a propriety of conduct which is always desirable in a servant.

A good footman, when sent out, will not waste his time, will execute his errands quickly, and return to his business. Punctuality is an important quality in the footman, who ought never to fail in time when ordered to attend on his master or his mistress.

Mrs. L.—I am aware it is impossible for you, my dear Madam, to give me a minute account of the duties of the numerous inferior domestics who form a part of large establishments: nor can such detail be necessary, as they are all immediately under the eye and charge of the housekeeper and the steward, and probably are rarely seen by the master and mistress whom they serve.

Mrs. B.—The details I have now given you will probably be more useful to ladies who are their own housekeepers, than to those whose rank removes them from any minute superintendence of domestic concerns.

CONVERSATION II.

THE NURSERY.

Mrs. L.—The next subject upon which I wish to converse with you, is respecting the nursery. Will you oblige me by affording me every information in your power?

Mrs. B.—To a person like yourself, totally inexperienced in the affairs of the nursery, I should particularly advise the engaging a steady upper nurse; one who has lived in a family of good habits. I have seen much anxiety arise from the consciousness of the mother, that her own ignorance in the management of children was

equalled by that of her nurse-maid ; and, thence, upon any varying appearance in her child, or upon the occurrence of any of those petty ailments to which an infant is liable, during the first months of its existence, the young and affectionate mother endures an anxiety and agitation, which would not be exceeded even in cases of the utmost extremity. Here the experience of the nurse may come to her aid, and allay her fears by the assurance, that the indisposition of her child is not more than what all such little frail tenements of clay must undergo upon entering life. Still, every mother should be the entire mistress of her nursery, and direct its chief concerns. I would not have her, by any means, place herself under the guidance of her servant, nor trust to her judgment beyond the power it may have to allay her own too ready fears. Until her experience shall enable her to administer such gentle medicines as may be sufficient to remove slight indispositions, I would recommend her to apply to her medical attendant, whose advice, if he be a sensible man, will be a useful lesson in giving aid to her judgment, while it diminishes her fears.

The nurse should never be permitted to leave an infant even while sleeping, and, therefore, she ought to have an assistant, or the housemaid should be appointed to bring such things as she may require into the nursery, such as coals and water, her different meals, and the food prepared for the child. When there are two or three young children, an under nurse-maid becomes absolutely necessary ; and she, too, should possess a good and willing temper, and cleanly habits : upon her waiting upon the nursery should devolve, and she should also be required to walk out with the children. She should be a sufficient sempstress, to assist in making and repairing the children's clothes.

Mrs. L.—Do you not think a nurse-maid should be well aware of the responsibility attached to her situation ?

Mrs. B.—If you are fortunate enough to meet with a

able woman as a nurse-maid, you may perhaps make comprehend, without giving her too much self-importance, how very much the future welfare of your children is dependent on the manner in which their first years are spent; and that all the anxious cares you can bestow upon her will be inefficient if they be not in some measure seconded by hers. She is your deputy; and for the breach of such regulations and restrictions as you may think fit to impose she is responsible.

RS. L.—Would you allow a servant to correct the children whom she has under her charge?

RS. B.—I would on *no account* permit even the most exceptionable servant to inflict on children personal correction; such can only be allowable in the nursery from the hand of a parent, who it can scarcely be supposed would give pain to her offspring from any angry impulse of the moment, but only from the conviction that such chastisement is the best specific for the fault that it may have committed. But the mother, who suffers her children to be punished by her hirelings, of whose judgment she has had little reason to form a high opinion, yields to a power more likely to be exercised in wrath, than in the spirit of justice, or with the desire to prevent the repetition of the offence. The power of a nurse ought to extend no further than to enforce by gentle, but decided and firm measures, the wishes and orders of the parent; and, far as my experience enables me to judge, I can see no reason to apprehend, that the united firmness of the parent and the nurse constantly adhered to, will not generally prove successful, in bringing into due subjection the powerful rebel in the nursery. Yielding and coaxing are the greatest enemies to obedience; and, when the nurse resorts to such means to obtain it, she shows her weakness. Those most willing to avail themselves of it, and she resorts upon them punishment of a painful nature, which probably will be the remedy applied to cure the

evil which her want of decision has occasioned. If on the contrary, she had known how to preserve a determined manner without being harsh, obedience would have become a thing of course with her little charges ; and I can venture to affirm, that such children would be much less liable to be peevish and passionate than those whose natural wilfulness had received no such check.

Mrs. L.—You have already mentioned the grievous effects which may arise in a nursery from the bad principles of those employed in it. I should imagine their habits must also have an important influence, both on the health and the morals of children.

Mrs. B.—The habits of a nurse-maid have an undisputed effect on the health of an infant, and, in various ways, may be detrimental to future happiness. Indeed, both physical and moral education may be said to commence with the first breath of life.

The habits that an infant's life calls immediately into action from its nurse, are thoughtfulness and cleanliness. A nurse-maid without the former, will not think sufficiently of the comfort of her charge : she will hear it cry without endeavouring to know the cause, in order to administer relief. It may be suffering pain from bandages and strings too tightly drawn, while its apparent uneasiness, if not unheeded, is attempted to be lulled away, rather than the cause removed. It may be subject, by a careless exposure to draughts of air, or from the effects of too glaring a light, to inflammation of the eyes, the foundation of future diseases, which may hereafter impair the vision, if not destroy it altogether. Sight, being the most delicate of our senses, and, I think, the most valuable also, cannot be too carefully guarded. The hearing also may be sacrificed to carelessness. Leaving the head damp after washing, and exposure to cold winds, with the ears not well covered, frequently cause the ear-ache, and temporary deafness, which may be the origin of that disposition to

permanent deafness, which frequently shows itself, and saddens the latter periods of life. What may be the effects of such misfortunes upon the character and disposition of individuals thus afflicted, it is not possible for me to say; but generally they are such as affectionate parents would earnestly wish to avert from their offspring. From the want of cleanliness of a nurse, the health of a child may be greatly affected. If the skin be not well washed, the pores will become clogged, and the insensible perspiration impeded, by which the whole system will become deranged; and this is one cause of the squalid appearance which some children present. Besides this inconvenience, that want of cleanliness and order, which is often betrayed at other seasons of life, may be attributable to such defects having prevailed in the nursery, in which I believe, that not only our bodies are cradled and nourished, but also the virtues and the vices of our minds.

As the life of the infant proceeds, the activity of the nurse is another habit of importance to it. As soon as its strength will permit, it should be in gentle motion almost the whole of the day, except during the intervals necessary for its sleep and nourishment. A child of four months old should begin to spring in its nurse's arms; to crow at the objects which attract its attention, and to grasp, though with imperfect vision, at the things beyond its reach. But how often have I seen the reverse! and have wished to have taken from the dull and indifferent nurse the little being that has hung heavily upon her arms, while it looked around it with vacant stupidity, and whined half the day away, merely because its attention was not roused, nor that natural gratification afforded to it, which children derive from the unfolding and exercise of the perceptive faculties. A very sensible nurse-maid, whom I once met with, accustomed herself, whenever she saw the little boy, of whom she had the care, looking steadfastly at any object, to suffer him to examine it well, in every direction,

and to permit him, when possible, to handle it. Sue would also call his attention to almost every object which presented itself in their walks, even from the stately ox to the spider hidden from its unwary prey. This child was afterwards remarkable for his accurate observation, and for the power of fixing his attention, when required, upon his various studies. I have no doubt he was indebted to his nurse for the early developement of these powers, which proved most advantageous to him in acquiring knowledge, and in making just observations on his progress through life.

MRS. L.—What great acuteness and penetration some children evince, in discovering the traits of character of those who are about them! This is a sufficient reason for caution in the selection of their attendants.

MRS. B.—And a motive for instructing them, as to the best measures to adopt towards children. In general, when a child has arrived at this age of observation, and when his reasoning powers are beginning to act, a war commences in the nursery between himself and his maid: she is resolute to continue him in that state of infanting subjection most pleasing and least troublesome to herself, while he is as determined to escape from her control. The consequence is constant altercation,—she reprimanding and threatening to appeal to the higher powers; all which he opposes, if not with equal eloquence or commanding voice, with as much defiance as he can express, and by every petty and aggravating insult his fertile imagination can suggest. This state of warfare it is desirable, for the comfort of both parties, to avoid. But where there is such wilfulness on the one side, and but little good humour and judgment on the other, what can be done? It is difficult to say, unless reform could be effected on the one part so as to induce it on the other. An active and spirited child, of four or five years of age, must expend a portion of his spirits in freely ranging about his nursery

in trying the strength of his lungs. All the reprimands which the nurse can bestow will not check him, she should, therefore, do well to yield occasionally, and only exert her authority to obtain a quiet season, when the comfort of the other children require it. Even then she should be provided with some occupation for the little intruder which would amuse his mind, and render the change agreeable to him. A box of bricks for building houses, a pencil and paper, or coloured pictures, I have seen afford an hour's quiet amusement to very lively children, while the younger ones were having their morning's nap. It is an excellent art in a nurse-maid to accustom children to amuse and occupy themselves; an art equally conducive to her comfort and their benefit. If she thus serve their good temper and her own, she will not find them often refractory. They will obey her almost without murmur in those things which the good government of a nursery requires. The great comfort, certainly, of the nursery depends upon the temper and management of the nurse-attendant. Children, unless they are ill, are generally ready to be pleased, particularly if they have not been permitted, by the neglect of their comfort and forgetfulness of suitable amusement, to acquire the habit of fretfulness, which, besides being painful to hear, is most likely to end in forming a temper of confirmed fretfulness and discontent. Although we know what a variety of dispositions even one nursery may produce, and how differently children may be affected by the same treatment and management, yet I am much inclined to believe that fretfulness and discontent will seldom prevail where the nurse-maid is lively, active, forgetful of herself, and possessing the art of amusing, or, in better words, of occupying the little idle tenants of her domain. If occupation be not given them, they will contrive to make it for themselves, and hence springs that incessant complaint of some nurse-maids, that they cannot keep the children out of mischief.

One mode of amusement I should, without doubt, forbid; I mean the relation of stories to children in the nursery. It would be dangerous to allow a servant to decide what narrations are or are not proper to be told; therefore I believe it is better to prevent this amusement altogether, and to supply the nursery with such books as may be suited to the ages of the children, and innocent in their effects on the imagination.

Mrs. L.—I suppose you will agree with me in prohibiting the admission of the nurse's friends and visitors to the nursery?

Mrs. B.—Certainly; as productive of many and serious inconveniences. During such visits the children are entirely neglected, while a stream of gossip flows rapidly between the parties, and sweeps away the reputation, not only of the families they serve, but of as many more as the annals of the servants' hall can furnish; complaints are freely vented against the places they occupy, and sometimes each works up the other to such a point that nothing but leaving their places can then satisfy them. All this time the elder children may have been auditors of this colloquy, each taking in as much as his comprehension permits, and each, perhaps, having a different, and all an unfavourable, impression made on the mind.

Acquaintance out of doors are also evils. Often the children are kept shivering in the cold during long parleys, running great danger of taking not only severe colds, but of catching some of the diseases which prevail at different seasons of the year, from those with whom they are thus made to associate. I have no doubt that children often take the complaints to which they are liable, from associating with other servants and children; and perhaps they may receive these diseases at the very time in which their constitutions are least able to undergo them; and, then, a struggle of anxious length ensues between life and death. Yet, is this inconvenience most difficult to remedy in town,

here the observation of the mistress can scarcely extend beyond the walls of her house. Great as the inconveniences are in allowing this intercourse with out-door acquaintances, the prohibition is hazardous ; for it, certainly, tends to the practice of deceit in your domestics, and to the inculcating of it in your children. The temptation to gossip is powerful, while the prohibition is perhaps regarded as a particularity to which nothing but the fear of discovery would induce attention : and, if the silence or dutifulness of the children can be secured, either by coaxing or by threats, I am afraid the prohibition would prove but a slight restriction, in very many cases.

Children, in general, are too long left under the superintendence of the nurse. Boys, in particular, should be removed from the nursery at six years of age. The parents have no right to object to any additional care and anxiety this may occasion to themselves : they owe duties to their progeny which must be performed, and one of these is to lay not only a good foundation of future conduct, but to prevent the force of example from counteracting their intentions, at the earliest age.

CONVERSATION III.

CLOTHES AND FAMILY-LINEN.

Mrs. L.—I am again desirous of trespassing on your store of experience, to assist my immature judgment on various other points besides those on which we have before conversed. As I must in future study the best mode of purchasing and supplying, not only the various articles of my own dress, but every thing for household purposes,

I shall be obliged to you for any information you can afford me on this subject. In the first place, with regard to my personal expenses, I find I shall be obliged to limit them to a certain sum, at the same time my dress need not be otherwise than suitable to the rank I hold, provided I avoid extravagance and careless wastefulness; I have now an ample, well-stocked wardrobe, but how shall I keep it in its present state, with my moderate means?

Mrs. B.—A woman's wardrobe may be divided into two parts,—the ornamental and the useful. In the first I include all the various articles which are affected by fashion; every thing, in fact, of external dress. In these a good economist will avoid a superabundance. She will endeavour to check that feminine weakness—the love of variety, which so frequently displays itself by an ever-varying costume, and will confine the ornamental part of her wardrobe into as narrow bounds as the extent of her general style of living and visiting will permit. Whimsicality of dress is no proof either of good taste or of good sense, but rather results from the absence of both, or from the mistaken notion, that to attract attention is to gain admiration. But whimsicality, whether shown in dress, manner, or opinion, does not deserve, and never obtains, permanent admiration: it is more likely to meet with the smile of contempt or the sneer of ridicule. A claim to superiority and distinction established on such a foundation has nothing to secure it. It is those qualities only that are intrinsically good and useful, that can gain permanent admiration and esteem. It is true that every one who lives much in society must follow fashion to a certain extent, or must be prepared to encounter the laugh, and perhaps the scorn, of those who pronounce judgment on appearances. But it is extremes on either side, that are to be shunned by all who wisely prefer propriety and consistency to notoriety and peculiarity, and among such, I trust, you will rank.

Another disadvantage of possessing too many of the ornamental parts of female attire, is the fickleness of fashion, and the constant necessity which this must produce in altering the forms of dresses, which the means of the poorer classes do not allow to be thrown aside. For these alterations of dress much valuable time must be wasted, or much money squandered, and, in either case, the very attention which is requisite for so unworthy an object, takes the mind from more important and rational pursuits. Some women seem to think that life is of no use but to make or model dresses, and act as if they were born to be blocking blocks for showing off to advantage the workmanship of the ribband and lace manufacturer, of the mantua-maker, and the milliner.

The second part of a female's wardrobe, comprehending every article not subject to the laws of fashion, deserves particular attention and care ; and for your management of this I recommend this rule : do not neglect to make every year a small addition to most of the articles of which it is composed. By doing this you will scarcely perceive the effects of time upon your general stock, because the new supply will bear some proportion to the deficiencies which that may cause. But if you neglect this rule, the consequences may be that all at once you shall find your wardrobe to require a complete renewal, and your annual allowance will then scarcely suffice to provide it. Most of the things to which I allude are of an expensive nature, and sweep away no inconsiderable sum, when whole sets are to be purchased at once. All good economists agree in their approbation of this rule, and enforce it, more particularly, in regard to household and table linen.

In choosing linen or cambric, examine the threads if they are even and close ; a raw linen, with uneven threads, does not promise to wear well. Fine linens answer better than the coarse ones, provided they are not unsuitable for the use for which they are destined. The yard-wide

linens are not thought so strong and well-made as those of the narrower width, but the latter will not always cut out to the same advantage as the wider linens.

I recommend you to resort to good and old-established shops, rather than to those which are considered cheaper : the former rest their prosperity upon the approbation of steady customers, and will not knowingly offer them goods which are bad in quality, and which would prove unserviceable, while the latter are eager to attract vagrant purchasers, alluring them by the promise of bargains—a delusive promise, the goods thus offered for sale being usually of so flimsy a texture as to prove, on trial, scarcely worth the trifling sum that had been given for them.

MRS. L.—This love of bargain-making is another of the many failings of which our sex is accused. I cannot understand why it is that a feeling of exultation springs up within us the moment we fancy ourselves possessors of a bargain. It seems scarcely an honest principle which can induce us to be pleased at a supposed advantage we gain over the manufacturer or tradesman.

MRS. B.—It would be a far better and more upright feeling which prompted you, on entering a shop with a view to purchase, to desire only a just exchange between the dealer and yourself of commodity and specie. You yourself must endeavour to decide upon the real value of the articles laid before you, and to satisfy yourself that you are not called upon to pay more for them than what is reasonable. If the price exceeds your expectation, it then becomes more just to bring down your wishes to the purchase of articles of lower value, rather than to attempt, as many do, to beat down to your own terms the price of those of higher value. This I cannot but consider as a wrong principle to act upon, and I should be inclined to withdraw my custom from any tradesman whom I found to be in the habit of asking one price for his goods and accepting another. He is unjust to himself, if he permit

you to purchase from him at too low a rate, and unjust to you, if he require from you more than the goods in question are worth. In all steady, reputable shops, you will find the prices nearly the same, according to the state of the markets. Some variation there may be, occasionally, among them, arising, perhaps, from accidental circumstances, but, generally speaking, you will find this assertion true.

Those, also, who are fond of bargains, lose more time in hunting after them than the difference of the price in the articles they purchase can compensate, were even the principle upon which they act a proper one. This ranging from shop to shop has also given origin to a fashionable method of killing time, which is well known by the term *shopping*, and is literally a mean and unwarrantable amusement, at the expense of the tradesmen and shopkeepers who are subjected to it, and an insulting trial of the tempers of these poor people. I have seen ladies get down half the goods in a haberdasher's shop upon his counter, and, after talking for an hour or two on their qualities and prices, leave the shop without making a purchase. I do not judge too harshly in saying that they entered without any intention of purchasing, and merely for amusement.

With regard to family-linen, bargains are particularly to be avoided by the economist, as table and other household linen should be purchased on the presumption that they have strength and durability for the wear of many years, and this no bargain, which I have ever seen, could fairly promise. It is not convenient to every one to purchase these expensive articles of very fine materials, but, when it can be done, I am persuaded it answers well, as to durability; and in washing, the colour is more easily preserved in fine than in coarse linens.

Mrs. L.—What a serious expense is washing in a family!

I am desirous of ascertaining the least expensive way of having it *well done*.

Mrs. B.—I am glad to hear you lay an emphasis on the words *well done*. Bad washing can never be at a cheap rate ; however little you may fancy you pay for it, it is still too dear. It will ruin your clothes and linen, which will not serve half the time they might have done, with a good clean washing, and a proper getting up.

Mrs. L.—Is it better to have the washing done at home, or to send it out to a laundress ?

Mrs. B.—Our grandmothers would be surprised at that question, and particularly with modern management in respect to washing, could they see it. In their day a family-wash was a matter of deep interest. The clouds and the weather-glass were examined, and all the usual domestic arrangements were made subservient to the happy accomplishment of this grand event. A wash was a season of toil and anxiety both to mistress and maiden, and, I believe, of dismay and discomfiture to every other member of the family. Its advantages, however, were great, though not in proportion to the inconveniencies endured. The whiteness of the linen, and the superior clear-starching and ironing of those days, are not, by any means, equalled in modern washing ; nor can our economists boast of any mode by which it can be done at so comparatively trifling an expense. But the presence and scrutiny of the mistress or housekeeper were essential to the good progress of the work, as well as to prevent any waste of provisions. That presence and scrutiny were in fact the soul, without which the whole body would have done almost nothing. No hands would have been diligent and no tongue silent ; and gossiping, I need scarcely say, is not a trifling enemy to despatch and industry.

The present habits, both of the heads of families and their servants, render the old-fashioned monthly wash out of the question, in these days ; and if that were not the case,

doubt whether, taking every thing into consideration, it would be desirable to revive the custom. To keep a laundry-maid, and to send the linen out weekly to a laundress, are the two modes of management, now, generally adopted. The expediency of the first plan depends upon the size of a family, and the conveniences which the house affords for this arrangement. When a family is large enough to employ the whole time of a laundry-maid, in washing, getting up, and in assisting to repair the linens, I am inclined to think it a desirable plan to be adopted. It most ensures good washing, and the proper airing of the linen. The inconveniences are, the danger of extravagance in soap, candles, and coals, which would render it very expensive. The laundry, also, is often a place of idleness and gossip for the other servants of the family, which is an evil difficult to prevent, unless a very strict observation is kept up on the part of the mistress. It is perhaps the most convenient and least troublesome plan to send the linen to a laundress, though, if your family be large, the expense is immense ; each article being separately charged, and the whole amount to a considerable sum weekly. The expense may, in some degree, be diminished, by calculating that the smaller articles, such as pocket-handkerchiefs, neckcloths, and frills, be charged by the dozen, instead of each article being separately charged. Some prudent managers get their washing done by contract, and when you can ensure its being well done, is a pleasant plan, because you ascertain the exact sum your washing will cost you during the year. But it often happens that the laundress does not discharge, very conscientiously, her part of the contract, but sends home the linen mismanaged, got up, and badly aired. When this happens, you cannot consider such washing as cheaply performed.

Mrs. L.—Are there any rules for the preservation of linen and clothes ?

Mrs. B.—Not many with which you can be unac-

quainted ; but I have no doubt you have often observed how much more carefully some people preserve their clothes than others of your acquaintance, whose dress soon loses its new appearance, and, after a few weeks' wear, looks as if it had undergone the brunt of as many months. This difference must arise, I imagine, from the want of due attention in cleaning, folding, and properly laying by those articles that have been changed.

Silk gowns and pelisses, when taken off, should have the dust gently shaken out of them, and afterwards they should be rubbed with a clean handkerchief, or linen cloth : then carefully folded, and laid by in drawers or wardrobes, and covered over with paper. Bonnets and straw hats should also be wiped clean from the dust before they are put away.

MRS. L.--What is the best method of removing spots and stains from silks and woollen cloth ?

MRS. B.—If gentle rubbing with cap-paper will not remove them from silk, a little French chalk, scraped and rubbed into them, will, with the aid of friction, generally remove them ; but this is apt to leave a dull appearance on the silk. Spirits of turpentine would remove grease spots better than the French chalk, if its strong smell were not an objection. Hartshorn will remove spots of grease upon woollen cloth, if rubbed well into it. Fuller's earth, also, wetted and laid on, and not rubbed off till it has remained a few hours on the grease spots, will be found to effectually remove them from woollen. Sometimes the droppings of wax-lights are very troublesome to remove from coats and velvets. Spirits of wine will dissolve the wax ; but as, in some cases, it may affect the colour, I recommend you to try a very simple mode, which is, to toast the crumb of a small piece of bread, and while hot apply it to the droppings of wax, a portion of which it will dissolve and imbibe, and by repeating this simple process several successive times, the whole wax will be gradually removed.

Mrs. L.—I remember hearing an argument between two clever managers on the subject of repairing clothes. One lady maintained that to be always mending was by no means good economy: it was a waste of time, and even an expense not compensated by the additional wear to be gained; and that after all, who could admire one of these well-mended garments, or exult in having by such apparent thrift lost sight of the original fabric, in visible repairs and patchings? Her opponent (the widow of a clergyman, who had brought up a large family respectably, but without abundant means,) had her own experience to vouch for the economy of repairing, although she readily concurred with the other in thinking the appearance no recommendation. Which side of the argument will you take?

Mrs. B.—I must agree with the widow, and express my suspicions of the false pretensions to economy of her opponent, who had not, perhaps, industry enough to be a true economist, and had omitted, we will suppose, to regularly examine the state of her wardrobe, and of the family-linen, until the articles were too far gone to be repaired to advantage. Unless this be done at regular intervals, either by yourself, or by one of the family to whom the charge of this department is assigned, it is more than possible that your linen may arrive at such a state of ruin as to render repairing quite inexpedient. It must be done in time or it cannot be done with advantage.

In sheets, and table-linen, appropriated for company, we will not, of course, do to have visible repairs; but, if any appearance of the threads breaking be observed, and the part neatly darned, even these may be preserved to a much longer period than what your friend could expect, by pursuing her system.

Mrs. L.—How shall I keep in tolerable order those parts of my wardrobe that belong to full dress? Full trimmed dresses, white satin, and silks, in general, very soon lose their fresh appearance.

Mrs. B.—Any mode, by which you can keep air, and consequently dirt, away from them, will answer for a short time ; but all such things are of so perishable a nature, both in themselves, as well as from the evanescence of fashion, that the securest way is to have as few to preserve as possible. White satin—and gauzes also, which change their colour almost as quickly, should be carefully wrapped up in light envelopes of paper. I have seen small closets nicely fitted up, in which to hang up dresses, and other parts of dress which would suffer if they were folded and laid within the narrow compass of a drawer or a wardrobe. These closets have wooden pegs arranged round them, and have muslin-curtains drawn close round the whole, so as to render them impenetrable to sun or dust.

The difficulty of preserving all such things is a sufficient reason for not having, at once, more than what is absolutely needful ; and I would not recommend you to seek to enlarge your stock of household-linen to any great extent, although it is very desirable to have an abundance. But it does it no good to lie by unused, and if brought into use, there is always some risk of losing a part of it by the dishonest or careless practices of those who have it in charge.

Furs and woollens should not be laid by for the summer-months, without having the dust well shaken out of them, and care taken that they are quite free from damp ; for dust and moisture are the great foes to be guarded against in the first instance, as tending to encourage the increase of moths and other insects. Many things are used as preventives against the inroads of moths ; such as sprinkling furs and woollens with spirits of turpentine ; putting camphor, pepper-corns, cedar-shavings, and Russian leather among them ;* but I believe the best plan,

* Tobacco, which is plenty and cheap in this country, is preferable to most of the articles above mentioned. Tobacco stems, leaf tobacco, or snuff,

After all, is to sew the furs up in linen, well aired, through which the moth cannot penetrate ; and once or twice, in the course of the summer, to have them taken out on fine sunny days, and after being well shaken, replaced in their envelopes, and put aside.

The mildew upon linens proceeds from their being put away damp from the wash, and it is a very difficult blemish to remove. When it has unfortunately occurred, you will find that soap rubbed on, and afterwards fine chalk scraped upon the spots, with a day's exposure to the sun, will remove it, if not at once, at least upon a repetition.

Fruit and red wine stains may be removed by a preparation of equal parts of slaked lime, potass, and soft soap, and by exposure to the sun while this preparation is upon the stain. Salt of lemon (*oxalate of potass*) will remove ink and iron mould.

When linen or muslins are scorched, in the getting up, without being actually burnt, a brown mark is left upon the spot, which may be removed by laying some of the following composition on it, before the article is again washed :—Slice six large onions, and express the juice, which must be added to a quart of vinegar, with one ounce of rasped soap, a quarter of a pound of fuller's earth, one ounce of lime, and one ounce of pearl-ashes. Boil the whole, until the mixture become thick ; and apply it to the scorched spot while it is hot.

sprinkled between the folds of woollen clothes, will answer the purpose of keeping out moths during the summer, when woollens are laid aside.

Amer. Ed.

CONVERSATION IV.

FURNITURE.

Mrs. L.—I have amused myself with observing the variety of tastes, displayed in the furniture of the different houses I have lately frequented. Many have been furnished in very good style, but in some I have noticed great errors and inconsistencies. For instance, what can betray inconsistency more, than to furnish rooms, not, perhaps, twelve feet square, in a style of splendour suited to spacious apartments? One's sight is absolutely overpowered by the effect of contrasting colours within so small a space.

Mrs. B.—The taste is not good which neglects to study consistency, whether in regard to furniture or to any other thing; nor can I think that that taste is to be admired, which expends itself in the furnishing of a few rooms, destined for the reception of company, and leaves the more important parts of the house, in which the comfort of the family is concerned, carelessly and insufficiently furnished. Comfort ought never to be sacrificed to appearance, unsubstantial and fruitless as it is!

Mrs. L.—In furnishing a house, what are the points to which you should first attend?

Mrs. B.—From what I have just said, you may suppose that I should recommend every article to be first provided, upon which comfort depends, for it carries its influence through every day and moment of our lives, and leaves to embellishments and refinements the power of giving only a temporary and casual gratification. These embellishments, however, may always be added in such degree as prudence will permit. But while the affluent may indulge their taste in adding ornament upon ornament, in their

houses, and in refitting them according to the varying fashion, those of narrow circumstances must restrain their fancies, and content themselves, if they can obtain such a portion of furniture as comfort alone requires. With them simplicity is good taste ; and when we consider the advantages which attend it, how surprising is it to find it frequently sacrificed to an attempt, and often a poor attempt, to vie in splendour with the affluent. With what comparative ease may a house be kept in cleanliness, which is only simply and usefully furnished. How much less liable is such furniture to be injured by accident or carelessness ; and when injured, or when, in the course of time, it requires to be renewed, how much more readily that can be effected than if the furniture were of a more costly nature ?

These considerations lead me to speak to you, in the first place, of furniture which is strictly useful, and which, therefore, is but little affected by fashion.

Every article of this kind should be of a good quality ; strength and durability being generally the chief points to be regarded.

Let us first enter the kitchen, and examine into some of the conveniences which every family, whatever its size may be, ought to have. Modern cooks have great advantages over their predecessors, which we can perceive even in the first step which we take in our examination. The kitchen-range now in common use comprehends a variety of conveniences, which both expedite the business of the kitchen, and save the labour of the cook. A good kitchen-range has the oven on one side of the fire, and the boiler of hot water on the other, or behind it, so as to be entirely out of sight. This should be fed with water from a cistern with a ball-cock, in order that it may be ready for use at a minute's warning. Formerly a cook had the separate fires of her oven and boiler to attend to ; but, now, one fire is sufficient to keep the whole range in use. These grates are calculated for moderate-sized families, and are

to be had of different dimensions, according to the cooking any family may require.

For very large families the steam-kitchen is extremely convenient; it saves fuel, keeps the kitchen cool, and even banishes from it the appearance and smell of cooking, while the cook is enabled to prepare for the table a greater number of dishes than could be done with a single fire, without some contrivance of this kind. I have also seen a cooking apparatus which combines even more advantages than the steam-kitchen. In the centre of this apparatus is the stove, upon which is a cast-iron plate, or table. This plate supports another, in which there are seven or eight circular holes, with cast-iron covers to them. These holes are of different sizes, and into which there are saucepans to fit. When the contents of any saucepan are required to boil, the cover is taken from the hole, and the saucepan is put into it, and thus receives the whole heat of the cast-iron plate below. If, on the contrary, only stewing or gentle simmering be needful, the cover is not removed from the hole, but the saucepan is placed upon it, and thereby receives only a moderate degree of heat. On one side of this hot plate is the boiler, heated by a flue from the fire; the same flue is carried on to the roaster, which resembles an oven, except in having valves to admit currents of air, by which contrivance the meat is made as brown as if it were roasted before a blazing fire; these currents of air also prevent the meat, thus cooked, from having the taste of the oven. When the valves are closed, the roaster may be used as an oven.

Above the roaster is a closet heated by the same flue; and in this baking may proceed when the roaster is otherwise employed. This is the description of one side of the fire; on the other there is a steam apparatus, supplied with steam from the boiler. This is admirably calculated for making soups, boiling meat, hams, and poultry. Potatoes may also be boiled well by steam; but green vege-

tables are better boiled in water, the colour being injured by the steam: and this is the reason why vegetables always look better when boiled in pump water. After serving this apparatus, the steam is carried on to heat another cast-iron plate, or table, upon which the cook is to dish her dinner, and which enables her to send it up with little or no diminution of heat. A dinner is spoiled, if it be sent up chilled, which evil this hot table cannot but avert: and therefore it must excite the admiration, and even gratitude, of all the lovers of the table. Beneath this plate is another hot closet, furnished with shelves, where such dishes may be kept hot as are not to be sent, immediately, to table.*

Mrs. L.—From your description this apparatus is very complete. Do you know the expense of it?

Mrs. B.—One on the largest scale would, I believe, be about fifty pounds; a smaller, perhaps, would amount to twenty pounds. The common kitchen range, which comprehends only the oven and boiler, costs from twelve to fifteen guineas.

Mrs. L.—Can you give me any idea of the number of implements the kitchen department requires?

Mrs. B.—They consist, chiefly, in various descriptions of saucepans, kettles, stewing, preserving, and frying pans. Besides these, there are gridirons, spits, ladles for basting, egg-slices, dredgers, coffee and pepper mills, Dutch ovens; tins for baking bread, cakes, and some descriptions of pastry; and a variety of other utensils, both of wood and earthenware, which it would be tedious to mention. Your cook, if she be orderly and neat, will soon inform you of any deficiency in such things as are essential; and I would recommend you to attend to her wishes on these points, if they appear to you to bespeak in her a desire to have all

* A model of this kitchen-range may be seen at Mr. Jeakes's, ironmonger, Great Russell Street.

around her in good order. Your kitchen probably contains a sufficiency of tables, dressers, and closets. Endeavour to render your larder as light and airy as possible, that no smell may remain in it, or want of cleanliness be unnoticed.

Let me, now I think of it, advise you to have all your saucepans and kettles made either of iron or tin. Copper utensils are not at all safe things in the hands of careless servants, who often suffer soups and stews to remain in the vessels in which they have been boiling until they are cold; and if a copper saucepan be not well tinned, this untidy habit is likewise one of great danger. Scarcely any thing can be cooked which has not in a greater or less degree, the power of corroding copper, at that part which is in contact with the air; and whatever is suffered to remain in a copper vessel thus corroded, soon imbibes the poison, and can scarcely then be eaten without very injurious, and often fatal effects. I believe there is no poison more powerful than verdigris, or the rust of copper; and so rapid is its progress through the system, that there seems barely time to avert its consequences by administering antidotes. There have been many melancholy instances of this, one of which is well known, and occurred some years ago at Salt-Hill, where, at a public dinner, many persons were taken ill and died. Upon investigation, it was discovered that they had all eaten of one particular dish, and that that dish had been prepared the day before, and had been left in the stewpan, ready to be made hot for the next day's dinner.*

Mrs. L.—Shall we now ascend to the dining-room?—and will you give me your opinion of the style of furniture most suitable for such apartments?

Mrs. B.—It is evident that every room should be fur-

* It is of importance to know that the best antidote for the poison of verdigris, and the other salts of copper, is sugar. It should be given as freely as the stomach can take it.

nished in a style not inconsistent with the use for which it is set apart. The dining-room, the place of rendezvous for the *important* concerns of the table, should not be furnished in the light and airy style which you may adopt in your drawing-room, in which amusement and ease are the objects desired; and where every thing is put into requisition which can excite lively and interesting conversation, or aid the loiterer to kill his grand enemy—*time*. But not so in the dining-room, where savoury vapours give warning of the danger of delay; there, no other attraction is desirable, nor scarcely any thing requisite, beyond the well-arranged table, and the chairs that surround it.

The furniture most usual in the dining-room is of a substantial kind; for instance, mahogany chairs, tables, and side-boards; curtains, frequently of moreen, and sometimes of crimson and scarlet cloth, but never, I think, of a lighter kind, such as chintz. A solid simplicity generally characterizes the style of the dining-room, rendering it less subject to the variation of fashion than in some of the other parts of a house, although you will find that refinement and luxury are always at work, introducing, even here, new wants, and encouraging every variety of whim and fancy.

The simplicity essential in the furniture of the dining room does not, however, preclude a display of good taste. This may be rendered conspicuous in the colours of the carpet and the curtains harmonising with the material of which the tables and chairs are made, whether that be oak, mahogany, or any other wood; and still more so in the form of these articles. Where economy is not important, an elegant taste may gratify itself in the display of exquisite workmanship, particularly carving, as far as respects the more solid furniture of a dining-room; and no ornaments are so much in place in a dining-room as pictures, busts, and similar specimens of art. Where pictures are exhibited, a person of good taste will rather

prefer to possess a few of high merit, than to have the walls covered with inferior performances: and as no strong reflected lights should be permitted to fall upon a picture, the walls, the carpet, and the curtains, should be of a hue which is more likely to absorb than to reflect light. Perhaps the best colours for a room containing pictures are deep olive green, or a dull crimson.

The size of the side-board is seldom well proportioned to that of the room; and, in general, little taste is displayed in its form; yet no piece of furniture is more capable of evincing it, than the side-board, which ought to be massive, without being clumsy; and, if carved, may be ornamented with appropriate devices. Gilding, except on picture-frames, is out of place in a dining-room.

MRS. L.—The style of drawing-room furniture is almost as changeable in fashion as female dress; sometimes it is Grecian, then Egyptian, and now Turkish. But in all its variations it shows, in my opinion, an improved taste in our times. How the stiff, high-backed, undeviating chairs, and the clumsy, unwieldy tables of our grandfathers would now distress our eyes, accustomed as they are to the easy elegant curve of the Grecian chair and couch, in which strength and lightness are so happily united.

MRS. B.—No one can deny the improvement that has taken place within the last half century, both in the taste which dictates the forms of our furniture, and in the skill which realizes them. But I cannot agree with you, if your admiration of the present fashion of furniture be unqualified. It is become of late too costly to please me. Those drawing-rooms which are fitted up according to the present style seem almost to arrive at Indian splendour, having papers with gold patterns, ottomans, chintz curtains, and Persian carpets, altogether fatiguing the sight by a multiplicity of ornaments, and a crowd of colours incongruously selected. These, too, as you have noticed, are frequently to be found in small rooms, with which they

are inconsistent, and therefore ridiculous. Large rooms will admit of more license to fancy than can be given, consistently with taste, when rooms of smaller dimensions are to be furnished. It is not well to make these too striking, or to crowd them with a variety of furniture, as it is the fashion to do. In fact, it is difficult, in a fashionable drawing-room, to steer clear of the various pieces of furniture and ornamental trifles with which it is crowded. If you turn to the left, you encounter an obstacle in a table covered with china, and if to the right, behind or before you, you must beware of *or molu* time-pieces, Indian cabinets, and casts of dying gladiators. Such things have their use, not unfrequently assisting to wile away the listless hour which intervenes between the time of the ladies and gentlemen retiring from the dining-room, and they may often spare the hostess some fruitless exertion; but, I think, when they are too numerous, they give a fluttered, untidy appearance to the room, and make one sometimes desire a vacant spot on which to rest the eye.

Mrs. L.—Which are now most fashionable, painted or papered walls?

Mrs. B.—Painted walls, chiefly of pale colours, are at this time most general; but, in a drawing-room, I prefer paper. The rich, gold-flowered, and deep crimson, embossed papers are much in vogue for large rooms, in which warm colours, and large patterns, may be assembled together without inconsistency, and without offending the eye to that degree which a similar selection of colours would occasion in small apartments, where simplicity, lightness, and cheerfulness should prevail.

Both in large and small rooms I should avoid sudden contrasts of colour, rather endeavouring to blend them by the introduction of intermediate tints.

Mrs. L.—Perhaps some of the rules which regulate the use of our colours in drawings might not be ill employed

in the selection of colours for any other purpose, either of dress or of furniture ?

MRS. B.—I do not think your suggestion quite useless, although I suspect that fancy, not rules, will generally sway our choice of these things. But let us inquire what these rules are ; and we shall then perceive if any use can be made of them.

Yellow, red, and blue are contrasts in all their shades, and the harmonizing tints are discovered by the union of two of them. These colours have different qualities ; blue is of a cold and unassuming nature, yellow illuminates, and red warms. Yellow and blue form green, yellow and red form orange, and blue and red produce violet. And, though yellow, blue and red, as I have just observed, are contrasting colours, yet, still greater contrasts to each may be procured by the union of two of them, for instance, blue and red form violet, and violet is the greatest contrast to yellow. The other intermediate colours, also, of green and orange, form the greatest contrasts to red and blue.

MRS. L.—It appears to me, that by taking advantage of these rules, which we owe to nature, we might avoid some of the errors of taste, so often discoverable in the selection of colours. The colour which it is intended should predominate in the drawing-room, would, I suppose, please the eye best by having its contrast blended with it, by the proper intermediate colours. I recollect your observations respecting the colours best suited for drawing-room bouquets. The same rules might be applied to the selection of carpets and papers. What are considered to be the most fashionable kind of carpets ?

MRS. B.—Of late Persian carpets have been much more in fashion than those of other patterns. They are of an expensive kind, as well as the Brussels, but much more durable than the Venetian and Scotch carpets, of which the texture is very slight. Durability is an essential point to which you should direct your attention, in the choice

both of the colours and of the texture of carpets, because, from their expensive nature, it is seldom convenient to renew them frequently.

Mrs. L.—It has lately been the fashion to have the handles of doors constructed either of ebony or of ivory:—do you admire this fashion?

Mrs. B.—These handles are pretty, and easily kept clean. It is the fashion, also, to paint the doors, shutters, and wainscots, in imitation of different kinds of wood, either of satin-wood, or of elm, or oak, with which the mixture of brass or any other metal would not accord so well as ivory or ebony.

Rose-wood chairs and tables have, for some time, taken place of japanned and mahogany furniture; and elm, of which the veinings are extremely varied and beautiful, is still more in vogue than rose-wood. Satin-wood is going out of favour, which is not, I think, surprising, as it is a poor, cold-looking wood, without any variety of veining, and is incapable of receiving a polish, except by varnish. It is tolerably pretty for boxes, and for small pieces of furniture, but is far inferior in beauty to the richly veined rose-wood or the elm. But of all these woods, mahogany has the most valuable qualities. It has durability and strength; is so hard and close in grain that no insect infects it, as is the case with other kinds of wood; it is capable of receiving, by mere friction, the highest polish; and it is improved by age rather than lessened in value; in fact, if fashion were not fantastic, mahogany furniture might be handed down from father to son, almost as undiminished in value as plate.

You have, I suppose, furnished your rooms with ottomans and couches, some of which are placed round the room, and some in the centre, where the size of the room will permit of them. The good, old-fashioned sofa has been long banished from the drawing-room; and if it have a place any where, it is, like an humble friend, un-

heeded, until in the hour of need its virtues are discovered. Couches and ottomans appear luxurious, and charm us by the promise of ease ; but, in reality, they are comfortless compared to the old capacious sofa, upon which one may extend oneself when either pain or weakness demand it. I think elderly people, who often require to recline in the course of the day, must be frequently ready to quarrel with the uneasy elegance of the couch.

MRS. L.—What a variety of ornamental trifles are become almost essential in every drawing-room ! I have not been in one which was not crowded with tables and slabs, upon which were arranged various specimens of ingenuity and taste. In one drawing-room, during the listless hour after dinner, I had an opportunity for making a tolerably accurate survey, but I can scarcely recollect half of what I saw. I remember the marble chimney-piece was ornamented with a French time-piece, over which hovered a number of Cupids, aiming harmless darts at Time's impenetrable breast, whose determined aspect would not permit any beholder to fancy, for a moment, that his course would be stopped. On each side of this time-piece were two alabaster urns, and beyond them the same number of very elegant brass lamps. A table of considerable size held a collection of good engravings, and a few volumes, handsomely bound, of some admired authors. Japanned slabs, each of which supported an alabaster figure, occupied the piers of the room ; and besides these, on two small tables, there were some very elegant specimens of china. From the centre of the ceiling was suspended a magnificent lamp, which seemed like the monarch of the whole, shining upon all alike. Card-tables and chess-boards were, also, to be found in different parts of the room, offering amusement to those for whom the other tables had no attractions. Altogether it was a brilliant room, but however I might feel pleased with it at that moment, I now question the taste which had, in thus mul-

tiplying ornaments, adapted the room rather for lounging and self-indulgence, than for the purpose of social intercourse. But to return to some of the essential parts of furniture. Does not rose-wood require great care in cleaning?

Mrs. B.—It should be gently rubbed every day with a soft duster, but should not be touched with wax or oil, which would destroy the varnish of the upholsterer. There are various mixtures prepared for polishing mahogany, but the best is the cold-drawn linseed oil, which, if put on occasionally, and rubbed well in, forms, in time, so settled a varnish, that nothing injures it. The chief disadvantage arising from the use of the oil is the dark colour to which it brings the mahogany, which of late, it has been more fashionable to preserve in its lightest shade.

Marble slabs should be washed with a flannel and cold soap and water. Every thing that is japanned is much improved by a little spirit of turpentine being rubbed upon them; but the smell of the turpentine renders it impossible to use it often in a drawing-room. It would, however, seldom be necessary to have this done, if every thing be kept clean by gentle rubbing; a piece of old silk is the best kind of rubber for such things.

The curtains, in a drawing-room, are made of various materials, but seldom of moreen. Chintz, and watered and plain damasks, are most usual. The colours for drawing-room curtains are generally delicate; and the curtains are now made with great simplicity. They are hung upon a richly gilt or brass rod, with large brass rings, and have no drapery or cornice. White muslin curtains, edged with lace, or with a ribbon run through broad hems, are still much used as inner curtains or blinds.

Bright stoves, highly-polished fire-irons, and steel fenders, are among the indispensable parts of drawing-room furniture. These should be rubbed every day with a leather, to preserve the polish, and to rub off every ap-

pearance of rust. Linen is the very worst thing with which to clean any thing of steel, for the least damp upon it would dim the high polish, and occasion rust. When any spots of rust have unluckily appeared, fine emery paper may be rubbed gently upon it, but this must be done very carefully, else, in removing the rust, it will leave behind a scratched appearance. The bright stoves are terrible grievances to the house-maid, and give her harder work to keep them in order than any other part of the furniture of which she has the care. To the burnt bars she has no alternative but the use of the emery paper, which scratches them, and compels her to hard rubbing before she can restore them to a proper degree of brilliancy. The ironmongers recommend polished steel to be rubbed with putty powder, laid on with a buff stick, and then rubbed off with the leather.*

MRS. L.—How should the oil-cloth in halls and passages be kept clean?

MRS. B.—Perhaps your servants may tell you that milk and water, or soap and water, improve the polish of oil-cloth; but this is not the case. Oil-cloth should be washed with warm water and a flannel. Soap, instead of improving it, takes the paint off; and milk gives it a streaky and greasy appearance, and deprives it of its glossiness. Bees' wax, rubbed on with a brush, gives a good polish, and prevents the paint from wearing off, but it renders it slippery, and dangerous to walk upon.

MRS. L.—Can you give me any directions respecting the choice of bed-room furniture? Feather beds, for instance: how shall I be able to ascertain their quality?

MRS. B.—Feathers when good are light and elastic; if heavy and knotted together they are certainly bad.

* A composition made by boiling Caoutchouc, or Indian rubber, in spirit of turpentine, and spread over polished steel furniture, with a flat, soft brush, is said to preserve it from rust; and, like a varnish on wood, to retain its polish.

The quill of the feather should be cut off close, and only the top of the feather retained. A great evil frequently attendant on new feathers is a disagreeable smell, which I believe is owing to the feathers not having been sufficiently stoved to destroy the animal juice. When there is this defect in a new feather bed, the only remedy is either to have the feathers taken out of the tick and stoved again, or to have the bed constantly in use. In time the smell will go off; but this latter remedy is not a very agreeable one.

It is of importance to have a strong linen bedtick; a thin, coarse one suffers the feathers to escape from it when the bed is shaken, and, in time, diminishes the bulk of the bed, in a greater degree than you would imagine.

To every bed there should be, besides the feather bed, either a wool or a hair mattress, a bolster, and two pillows. Those who like a high bed have straw paillasses under the mattress. Hair mattresses are not much more expensive than wool, and, being elastic, are generally liked better, although they are not as warm.

The Witney blankets are considered the best kind: they are thick and woolly, and yet light. The Lancashire blankets are closer and heavier.

Marsellois counterpanes are very handsome in appearance, but are so heavy, that to sleep under them occasions an oppression almost as bad as the night-mare. Heavy bed-clothes are unhealthy, rendering the respiration difficult, and increasing the heat of the body to a greater degree than is desirable. In some houses, I have noticed that the Marsellois counterpane is withdrawn from the bed at night, and replaced by one made of lighter materials.

The general practice of having carpets nailed down over the bed-room floors I cannot admire. Bed-room carpets, in my opinion, should be loose, and consist of moderate-sized pieces, that may be taken out of the room at least twice in the course of the week, and should have

the dust well shaken from them. In town this is more important than in the country, because insects of no pleasing description, with which the town is said to abound, are fostered by dust and uncleanness. And here let me remark, how very necessary it is to sweep under every bed each day. Nothing betrays an untidy house-maid more than the flue which collects under beds, and which, in a short time, will introduce into the beds a thousand nightly foes. Some housemaids pretend to have a horror of a mop, and think it degrading to use one; nor should I like to see my rooms mopped over instead of being scoured, but I have always insisted upon having a clean mop among the house-maid's implements; and that this, made damp, should be used under every bed, wardrobe, and drawers, in the house, each day. This damp mop collects all the dust that may have escaped the broom, and prevents it accumulating. Damp tea-leaves sprinkled over bed-room carpets, on those days in which they are not taken up, have the same good effect in gathering up the dust.

For the top of the bed I recommend you to have several sheets of cartridge-paper pasted together, and laid upon the tester, which, as the dust accumulates upon it, can be drawn off and cleaned.

The bed-hangings are, now, generally, either of moreen, or of chintz lined with coloured calico. Moreen is very serviceable, and is well suited to cold situations; it requires no lining, and, therefore, is less expensive than chintz, though not so pretty. Chintz washes tolerably well, and, when fresh calendered, looks almost as well as if it were new. But to have a bed fresh calendered and new lined, which it generally requires after the wear of two or three years, is expensive. The calico with which chintz is usually lined is seldom very strong when new, and, if it is exposed to much sun, it becomes too tender to bear either washing or fresh dyeing. Every time, therefore, a chintz bed ha

to be washed, the expense is equal to that of buying a new one.

In a well-furnished house, each bed-room and dressing-room should contain every thing requisite for the comfortable accommodation of either the different members of the family, or the visitants. It is miserable to see splendour in the drawing-room, and deficiency of comfort in the bed-room. Indeed our sleeping apartments should be the abode of comfort and cleanliness; calculated to refresh our bodies, by the complete appropriation of every thing they contain to the purposes of rest and usefulness. I think I should desire bed-rooms to be adapted as much for the repose of the senses as for the body. The eye, perhaps already dazzled by glare and show, should not here be caught by splendid decorations and gaudy colours, but a quiet cheerfulness should prevail, by which the spirits may be recruited after the waste they have, perhaps, experienced from business or from pleasure.

Nurseries should be airy and cheerful, and both the day and sleeping nurseries should have no more furniture in them than what is absolutely necessary. In the day room, in particular, there should be as little as possible to impede the active sports of its little inhabitants, or render their amusements in any way dangerous. Sharp-cornered tables, projecting shelves, and low fenders, should never be admitted into the nursery, nor should any hooks or nails be placed within the reach of juvenile heads and eyes. The windows should be made to open only on the upper part of the sash, or should have strong bars fixed so high as to render them proof against the adventurous spirit of childhood.

The sleeping nursery cannot, likewise, be too plainly furnished. Beds and cribs, without hangings, a low washing-table, a few chairs, a wooden tub for the children to stand in when they are washed, one or two small wooden horses, and a sufficiency of drawers and shelves, are the chief articles of furniture which it requires.

Let your servants' apartments be as plainly furnished as you like, but let the furniture be good of its kind, and such as will render those comfortable by night who have to labour for us through the day.

Mrs. L.—We have not yet entered the butler's pantry, which contains a considerable portion of essentials, as well as of various ornamental articles. We are possessed of a quantity of plate, the heir-loom of several generations. Many parts of it are rich and massive, but now useless; and often I am tempted to wish it were again subjected to the melter's pot, that it might be wrought into other and more modern forms.

Mrs. B.—Plate is so little affected by fashion, that I should have thought the greater part of your's might have been brought into use. The antique and massive pieces which you would condemn to the crucible, would be viewed with a species of veneration by most people, who would not consider their antiquity as any defect. Old plate marks ancestral dignity, and, therefore, is not likely to be despised by the generality of its possessors. Few persons who can boast of family honours, are indifferent to any of their insignia, even if they are not inclined to overlook the more substantial advantages of fortune. The imperishable nature of plate, and the little intrinsic value which it loses by time, renders its purchase less imprudent than if an equal sum were expended, either in ornamental glass or china. Yet, attention should be paid to consistency in the purchase of plate, as much as on the various points which we have before discussed. Some portion of plate is essential, and even economical, in every family, but whole services are exclusively the appendages of rank and affluence, and appear to me absolutely to require a correspondence in every particular, throughout the house, the table, and the whole establishment. That which is only consistently superb in the house and on the table of the nobleman, would be absurd in the cottage, or at the board of the tradesman.

Mrs. L.—There are various ways of cleaning plate ; which do you recommend ?

Mrs. B.—After the plate has been washed with hot water, rub it over with a mixture of levigated hartshorn and spirits of turpentine, which is the best preparation I have known for cleansing plate and renewing its polish. Remember, that two good-sized leathers are required for cleaning plate, one of which should be kept for rubbing off the hartshorn-powder, and the other for polishing up the silver afterwards. This process should be performed twice a week ; but on other days, merely rubbing with the leathers, after washing, will be sufficient. I have never seen any plate look better than that which is cleaned according to this direction, and there is nothing in the ingredients I have mentioned that can in the least injure the silver, which is sometimes the case with the nostrums that servants employ. The only thing to be strictly regarded by the servant who uses it, is to rub it off so well that the plate shall not retain the slightest smell of the turpentine. The turpentine is useful in removing every particle of greasiness from the plate, which mere washing will not do. I have seen some plate cleaned with muriatic acid, which gives a very high polish, but also a deep colour to the plate, almost resembling steel. The hartshorn and turpentine give as good a polish as the acid, without injuring or changing the colour of the silver.

Many people still prefer whiting and water, which cleans tolerably well, but does not renew the polish. When silver has, through neglect, become very dim and dirty-looking, it is necessary to boil it in soap and water for some little time, and afterwards the turpentine and hartshorn-powder can be used to great advantage.

And now let me caution you against intrusting too much of it into the hands of servants. It is leading them into daily temptation, which at some unhappy moment they may not have resolution to resist. It is seldom difficult,

either in town or in country, to dispose of stolen goods, and particularly plate, which favours the practices of the dishonest by the smallness of its bulk compared to its value. This renders it easy to carry it off unobserved, and as it is as readily melted down, its identity is quickly destroyed. Unfortunately we cannot avoid intrusting it into hands doubtful, sometimes, from carelessness of habit, and, sometimes, from dishonesty; and, perhaps, the only thing to be done is to enforce the observance of a few regulations which may serve as checks upon either the one or the other failing. In the first place, I suppose you to be provided with a proper plate-chest, or to have appropriated a strong closet in which to keep the plate you do not require for daily use. In this closet there should be, besides the list of the whole stock, one which marks the quantity given out; so that, after any occasional use of the whole, you will have these ready to refer to while you are superintending the replacing of it in the strong chest.

The plate which is in daily use, should be intrusted to the care of the servant who has the charge of cleaning it. This, in some families, devolves on the butler, in others, on the footman, and on the housemaid where there are no men-servants. It should be counted over to them when it is first placed in their hands, and they should be made to feel responsible for its re-appearance when it is required. They should be instructed to count it over every night, before they lock it up in the chest, or the drawer, in which it is kept; nor should they have permission to give the key of this drawer to any one of the servants unless upon some emergency. This frequent and regular investigation is the surest method of keeping together all the smaller articles of plate; it leads to an immediate inquiry when any part of it is missing, and it may, also, enable the responsible servant to ascertain which individual of the family had it last in use. It makes the house-maid attentive in bringing down the spoons, which are, now and then,

required in bed-rooms ; and, indeed, it checks carelessness in mislaying the plate among the servants generally. When any article of plate is missing, and the strictest search for it has been unsuccessful, it becomes the duty of the servant who has it in charge to inform his master or his mistress of the loss, that they may examine into the circumstances, and endeavour to discover how it has happened. If this examination satisfy them that the loss is to be attributed to accident alone, it is not likely that they will be very severe, or demand remuneration from their servant : they will rather endeavour to explain to him that they do not desire to punish him for a misfortune, but only, by proper restraints, and by the apprehension of disgrace, to keep him from error.

Mrs. L.—The glass and china also belong to the butler's department. What a beautiful variety of each the shops now present to us ! But, it is all of so expensive a description that inclination is compelled to yield to the curb and rein of economy. Taste alone must not guide me in the purchase of this branch of household goods.

Mrs. B.—Some considerable quantity of glass and china cannot be dispensed with ; but that which is intended for constant use, need not, surely, be of so costly a nature as to make you tremble and feel uneasy at every accident that may occur. It is very probable, that some degree of apprehension generally exists when these brittle appendages of the table are of a very expensive description ; and I do not think that this apprehension can be compensated by the trifling pleasure of possessing and using them. It is the form, and not the ornaments upon them which gives them their chief beauty, and this advantage may belong to the least expensive as well as to the most superb service of glass or of china. Cut glass is generally double the price of that which is plain, but it has the advantage of being stronger and thicker ; and, therefore, it may be considered as more serviceable.

Mrs. L.—The blue and white china is not, I think, as fashionable as it used to be. Do you admire it?

Mrs. B.—I think it is pretty, but I do not like it so well as many of the other kinds of china. That which is made at Swansea, as well as the Derby and the Worcester china, is extremely beautiful, and affords a puzzling variety to the purchaser. You will, I suppose, have a dinner-service of china, to be used when there is company, and I should recommend you to have another service for ordinary use: for if the best have to bear the brunt of every day's dinner, it will very soon become chipped at the edges, with here and there a cracked dish and a broken handle. You may easily select a very neat plain service, of which the expense will not be such as to render any breakage very vexatious. The kitchen, too, should be provided with its service of plain white-ware; comprehending, besides a sufficiency of plates, basins, cups, and jugs, a good store of dishes of different sizes, to give the cook the power of removing hot joints of meat, which are brought from the table, from the dish upon which they have been served, before the fat of the gravy has had time to cool and to adhere to the meat. No tidy cook will suffer meat to remain on the dish on which it was served. The kitchen-ware should, also, include some pudding-cups, or moulds of different sizes; pie-dishes, and covered jars for the currants, rice, and sugar, which the cook may, occasionally, receive from the stores. She will require two or three pans for salting meat, tongues, and hams; and a large, covered earthen pan or a wicker basket to keep her bread in. The pan is, perhaps, the best, as I believe an insect is apt to breed in the wicker of the basket; which is, also, more likely to allow the bread to become too dry. There are covered jars to be bought which hold about twelve pounds of any commodity. These may be obtained with the names of various articles printed on them, such as *rice*, *sugar*, *sago*, &c.

Mrs. L.—Do you know any good method of cleaning glass when it looks dull, or when it is discoloured by having had wine in it for some time? I have a great desire to have the glass look as brilliant and clear as possible. There is, in this respect, a great difference in various houses, which, I suppose, must arise from a little negligence in the master or the mistress, and a great deal on the part of the servants.

Mrs. B.—Decanters, in which the wine has stood some time, may be cleaned by putting a few drops of muriatic acid into them, and afterwards washing them well with cold water. Muriatic acid, put into the water in which the glass is washed, removes any discoloration from wine, and certainly improves the polish of the glass. Egg-shells pounded small, and put with some water into decanters, will have the same effect. Much of the brilliancy of glass depends on drying it with great care, immediately after it is washed; and rubbing it for some time after it is dry. You must remember in purchasing glass-cloths to buy them tolerably fine, because, from fine linen, there is but little lint; when these cloths give much lint to the glass, it occasions great trouble to the servant to remove it entirely. A brush is necessary for polishing cut-glass after it has been wiped dry. There are brushes made soft, on purpose for glass. Glass, you know, is washed in cold water, and china in as hot as can be used. Some people think it better to wash glass in water just warmed, but I do not think it looks so clear afterwards as it does when washed in cold water; besides, servants are sometimes hasty in their proceedings, and I have seen them plunge glass into hot instead of warm water, by the effect of which there has been an instant loss of one or more articles. In frosty weather, glasses are very liable to crack, if hot water be put suddenly into them. This circumstance is owing to the sudden expansion of the inside of the glass, while the outside remains contracted; for as glass is a very bad con-

ductor of heat, the heat does not permeate the side of the vessel sufficiently quick to expand it equally throughout. Glass lamps and lustres should be washed in cold water with soap, put on with a sponge or a piece of flannel.

Mrs. L.—Is it of much use to cement glass and china when broken?

Mrs. B.—I do not think glass can be cemented well. The broken parts may sometimes be rivetted together by very small brass tacks, but they spoil the appearance of the thing they repair. China not being transparent, may be cemented better than glass, though I do not think it is ever very serviceable after it has undergone the process. It may be rivetted as well as glass; but neither cementing nor rivetting will render any article thus repaired, capable of again holding a liquid with safety. For old china which is kept merely for ornament, cementing answers very well. I have made a very good cement by mixing together equal parts of glue, white of egg, and white lead. The juice of the garlic is another strong cement, and leaves no mark where it has been used. A very good cement is made by boiling the curd of skim-milk with lime.

There is also another excellent cement (but it is rather troublesome to prepare,) which is made by steeping two ounces of glue for some hours in distilled vinegar, and afterwards boiling them together. Then pound to a soft pulp a clove of garlic, and half an ounce of ox-gall, the juice of which must be strained through a linen cloth, and added to the vinegar and glue; then a drachm of gum sandarach, powdered; a drachm of turpentine, half a drachm of sarcocol, and of mastic powder, with an ounce of highly rectified spirits of wine, must be put together in a bottle, which must be stopped, and put into a place in which the enclosed mixture can be gently heated. Here it must remain for three hours, and during that time must be frequently shaken. This mixture must be poured upon the solution of glue while hot, and both must be

stirred together with a stick. Part of the moisture must be evaporated by the fire, when it will be fit for use. This cement must be wet with vinegar, and melted over the fire before it is used. When glass is to be cemented, some powdered glass should be mixed with it.

I am afraid, you have found our conversation tedious, from the many details it has embraced. Let us endeavour to shake off some of its effects by a walk, before the sun takes its departure.

CONVERSATION V.

SUPPLY OF PROVISIONS.—MARKETING,—PERSONALLY,—BY SERVANTS.—BOOKS TO BE KEPT WITH TRADESMEN.—PROVISIONS WHICH ARE NOT OF A PERISHABLE NATURE ARE MOST ADVANTAGEOUSLY PURCHASED IN LARGE QUANTITIES.—STORES,—DISTRIBUTION,—PERSONALLY, OR UNDER A HOUSEKEEPER.—CONFECTIONARY.—PRESERVES.—PICKLES.—COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE OF MAKING THESE AT HOME AND PURCHASING THEM.—WINE-CELLAR.—FRUIT-ROOM.—COOKERY-BOOKS,—WHEN TO BE IMPLICITLY FOLLOWED, WHEN MODIFIED.

Mrs. L.—To supply a family advantageously with provisions is another important point of good management, upon which I request your advice.

Mrs. B.—The first law, in this branch of economy, is to purchase every article at the best market, and of the best quality. Although the cost of inferior things may tempt you to buy them, you will find, as they are consumed, so much waste, in consequence of their inferiority, that the price is soon equalized with articles of a superior

kind. However economically it may be expedient for any family to live, it will still be found that the best provisions are the cheapest; and this is particularly the case with butchers' meat, the coarse joints being, in general, very unprofitable. The bone, skin, and gristle, in such pieces, bear a great proportion to the meat, which is itself hard, indigestible, and particularly unsuitable either for the stomachs of delicate people or for those of children. The most advantageous way of employing it, is in making soups or gravies; and it does, also, very well for sausage meat; but for roasting and boiling, choose the prime joints, such as legs of veal and mutton, sirloins, ribs, and rounds of beef.

MRS. L.—Were I to market for myself, how strangely I should be puzzled in my choice of meat! How could I tell whether it was fine or indifferent, recently or too long killed?

MRS. B.—There are some rules which may at first assist you; and after a little practice and experience, you will be able to ascertain almost from the first look, the quality and state of the meat. These rules I will give you. OX-BEEF, when it is young, will have a fine open grain, and a good red colour; the fat should be white, for when it is of a deep yellow colour, the meat is seldom very good, and the animal has probably been fed upon oil-cakes, which may have fattened and increased its bulk, but certainly it will be found not to have improved either the flavour or the appearance of the meat.* The grain of cow-beef is closer, the fat whiter, and the lean scarcely so red as that of ox-beef. When you see beef, of which the fat is hard and skinny, and the lean of a deep-red, you may suppose

* It is necessary to correct an error, which is too general respecting the nature of oil-cake. It is not, as is supposed by many, an animal matter; but is the cake produced by pressing the oil out of linseed, in the preparation of linseed-oil. It was used in Holland for feeding cows more than a century ago.

it to be of an inferior kind; and when the meat is old you may know it by a line of a horny texture running through the meat of the ribs.

VEAL is generally preferred of a delicate whiteness; but, in my opinion, it is more juicy and well flavoured when of a deeper colour. The tchers are said to bleed calves profusely, in order to produce this white meat; but this practice must certainly deprive the meat of some of its nourishment and flavour. When you choose veal, endeavour to look at the loin, which will afford you the best means of judging of the veal generally; for if the kidney, which you will find on the under side of one end of the loin, be deeply enveloped in white and firm looking fat, the meat will certainly be good; and the same appearance will enable you to judge if it have been recently killed. The kidney is the part which changes the first; and, then, the suet around it becomes soft, and the meat flabby and spotted.

MUTTON must be chosen by the firmness and fineness of the grain, its good colour, and firm, white fat. It is not considered excellent until the sheep be about five years old, although it is too often killed younger.

LAMB will not keep long after it is killed. I believe you may discover by the neck end in the fore quarter, if it have been killed too long; the vein in the neck being bluish when the meat is fresh, but green when it is stale. In the hind quarter, the same discovery may be made by examining the kidney and the knuckle, for the former has a slight smell, and the knuckle is not firm, when the meat has been too long killed.

PORK should have a thin rind; and when it is fresh, the meat is smooth and cool; but, when it looks flabby, and is clammy to the touch, it is not good: and pork, above all meat, is disagreeable when it is at all stale. If you perceive many enlarged glands, or, as they are usually termed, kernels, in the fat of pork, you may conclude

that the pig has been diseased, and the pork cannot be wholesome.

BACON, also, should have a thin rind ; the fat should be firm, and inclined to a reddish colour ; and the lean should firmly adhere to the bone, and have no yellow streaks in it. When you are purchasing a ham, have a knife stuck in it to the bone, which, if the ham be well cured, may be drawn out again without having any of the meat adhering to it, and without your perceiving any disagreeable smell. A short ham is reckoned the best.

VENISON, when young, will have the fat clear and bright, and this ought also to be of a considerable thickness. When you do not wish to have it in a very high state, a knife plunged into either the haunch or the shoulder, and drawn out, will by the smell enable you to judge if the meat be sufficiently fresh.

With regard to venison, which, as it is not an every day article of diet, it may be convenient to keep for some time after it has begun to get high or tainted, it is useful to know that animal putrefaction is checked by fresh burnt charcoal ; by means of which, therefore, the venison may be prevented from getting worse, although it cannot be restored to its original freshness. The meat should be placed in a hollow dish, and the charcoal powder strewed over it until it cover the joint to the thickness of half an inch.

MRS. L.—What are the rules for choosing fish ?

MRS. B.—**TURBOT**, which is in season the greater part of the summer, should have the underside of a yellowish white ; for when it is very transparent, blue, or thin, it is not good : and the whole fish should be thick and firm.

In **COD**, the redness of the gills, the whiteness, stiffness, and firmness of the flesh, and the clear freshness of the eyes, are proofs of its being good. The whole fish should be thick and firm. It is in season from December to April.

SALMON should have a fine red flesh and gills ; the scales should be bright, and the whole fish firm. Many persons think that salmon is improved by keeping a day or two , but, in London, this precaution is unnecessary. That which is caught in the Thames is considered the finest, though there can scarcely be better fish than the Severn salmon.

SKATE is white and thick when it is good, and may be improved by keeping for one or two days. When it is eaten very fresh, it is hard and tough.

SOLES, when fresh, are cream-coloured on the under part ; but when they are not fresh, their appearance is bluish and flabby. They are a valuable fish, being almost continually in season, besides being excellent eating. The middle of summer is the period, however, in which they are considered to be in the greatest perfection.

A **HERRING** should have red gills, and fresh bright eyes ; and the whole fish should be stiff and firm.

WHITINGS may be had good almost throughout the year ; but the time in which they are in their prime is early in the year. The whiting is a light and delicate fish, and in choosing it you must examine whether the fins and flesh be firm.

MACKEREL looks very flabby, the colours of the scales faded, and the eyes dull, when it is not fresh. It is almost the worst fish for keeping, or for carrying to any distance ; on which account it is permitted to be sold on Sunday in London.

The **HAKE** is a fish which is much esteemed, when it is good, in Ireland and the west of England. It is difficult to distinguish its goodness by the eye, but this is readily determined by examining a notch made near the tail with a sharp knife. If the cut edge of the flesh appear curdy, the fish is good and in season.

The **MULLET**, the **DORY**, and some other fish too, are so rare, that it is difficult to determine the qualities which

characterize their degrees of excellence; but you will seldom err, if you choose them from the firm texture of their flesh, the redness of their gills, and the brilliancy of their colours.*

* There are many excellent fish to be found alive in the markets of New-York during their season. The following are some of them:—

Halibut. The halibut is shaped like a flatfish or flounder, and grows to the size of 300 pounds or more, and is three and four feet long. It is brought to the New-York market as early in the season as March or April. This fish is taken with the hook and line in the Atlantic Ocean off Sandy-Hook, and along our coast to the northward and eastward, before the water loses its wintry coldness. As the warmth increases, the halibut changes his ground, and migrates to the banks of Nova-Scotia and Newfoundland, and there enjoys a coolness congenial to his nature. The markets are supplied with halibut in April and May, and it becomes scarce in June. It is sold from six to eight cents the pound. The flesh is white and nutritious, and may be cooked in almost any way. The rib-pieces, and cuts near the fins, are considered the best parts.

Shad. This is one of the best seasonable fishes that is to be found in our waters. It is a species of herring not common in the waters of Europe, though it is known there as well as here, by the scientific name of *Clupea Alosa*. It comes from the ocean, and visits us at New-York, in an annual migration regularly in March or beginning of April, and disappears in June. It is highly prized by the people as an article of food, and during the run of shad, it is largely consumed in a fresh state, coming to market daily, fresh, and good, as taken in the river by nets. It may be fried, broiled, or stuffed and roasted, or baked in an oven, but not a good fish to boil. During the remainder of the year, when fresh shad are out of season, the pickled or salted shad may be purchased; large quantities being taken and preserved in this way, in the rivers to the south and north of New-York. The shadfish ascends the Hudson river and others to breed. It usually weighs from four to five pounds, but has been taken as heavy as twelve pounds.

Mackerel. The spring mackerel is also a migrating fish, and succeeds the shad, or commences its run along the coast of New-Jersey and Long Island just before the shad disappears. It does not ascend the rivers, but continues its course north-eastward in immense shoals, and is taken by the fishermen with the hook and line, while sailing in smacks along the coast from the mouth of the Delaware to Nova-Scotia.

These fish are kept in cars and sold alive in the markets. They are mostly broiled and brought to the breakfast-table. The larger ones, 16 or 18 inches long, sometimes grace the dining-table when stuffed and baked in an oven.

Seabass. This is both a breakfast and dinner fish. The smaller ones broiled in the morning, and the larger ones boiled for the dinner-table. The colour of this fish is black, or speckled with black and white, the black pre-

Fresh-water fish may be chosen by similar observations respecting the firmness of the flesh, and the clear appearance of the eyes, as salt-water fish.

dominating on the body of the fish, and the white on the belly. It is short and thick, and weighs from two to three pounds. The market is supplied with the seabass from the disappearance of the mackerel in June to the month of October, at from six to eight cents the pound. It is an excellent fish, and taken with hook and line most plentifully in the ocean near Sandy Hook. A few straggling ones ascend the river, and are taken in the bay, and even at the wharves of this city.

Striped-bass or Rockfish. This fish is very highly and justly prized by the New-Yorkers, among whom it is generally known by the former name, while that of Rockfish is given to it in Philadelphia. It is savoury and excellent beyond the generality of fishes, and may be broiled, boiled, or baked. The common abode of the striped-bass is the salt water; but he migrates to the fresh streams and recesses to breed during the spring, and for shelter in winter. It ascends the Hudson river above Albany, and is taken with the hook and line as high up as the mouth of the Mohawk.

The greatest run of this fish is late in the fall. Instead of going away on the approach of winter, the striped-bass seeks refuge in bays, and recess, on the south side of Long Island, where it may remain warm and quiet. Here the fishermen find it, and make great hauls in the autumn and winter, when great numbers are brought to market in a frozen state. At this time it is usual to take some of the very large and heavy ones, weighing from 40 to 60 pounds. The smaller sizes, however, are the best. This fish remains in our waters all the year round, but is in season from October to spring. It is taken with the hook as well as in nets, from the largest to those of half a pound.

The head and shoulders of a large striped-bass are most excellent broiled, containing most of the fat and rich gelatinous substance. A fish of moderate size may be boiled whole, for the dinner-table, or stuffed and baked, while the small ones are split open, corned over night, and broiled in the morning for breakfast.

Blackfish. The blackfish is a stationary inhabitant of the salt water about New-York, being fond of rocks, reefs, and rough bottoms. It is in season from April to cold weather, and is considered a very fine fish for the table. It sells in our market from six to ten cents the pound. Blackfish are taken with the hook and line, and sometimes weigh 10 or 12 pounds, but a good size fish weighs two and three pounds.

Sheep's-head. This fish grows large enough to weigh 14 or 15 pounds. One that weighed four pounds and a half, measured twenty inches in length, eight in depth, and three in thickness. Sheep's-head is the most esteemed of the New-York fishes, and is sold for a higher price than any other, excepting, perhaps, fresh salmon and trout. The price varies from a dollar to a dollar and a half, for a fish of middle size, that is, from four to seven pounds. It is the opinion of some that nothing of the fish kind can exceed in

CARP and **TENCH** are in season during the months of July, August, and September. The former should be killed as soon as it is caught, because it will live a considerable time out of water, and when this is permitted it wastes the firmness of its flesh.

The **Thames EELS** are considered finer than any other which are brought to market, and may be known by their bright silvery underside. Eels caught in pools have gene-

excellence of taste and flavour, a good boiled sheep's-head fish, properly prepared for dinner.

This noble fish visits the neighbourhood of Long Island annually. Emerging from the depths of the ocean, he finds in the recesses and inlets there, a plenty of the crabs, muscles, and clams, on which he loves to feed. He confines himself strictly to the salt water, never having been seen in the fresh rivers. His term of continuance is only during the warmest season, that is, from the beginning of June to the middle of September, or sometimes as late as the first of October. He then departs to the unknown depths of the Atlantic ocean, and is seen no more until the ensuing spring.

The sheep's-head swim in shoals, which are sometimes surrounded in great numbers by the seine. This fish also bites at the hook, and is sometimes speared by torch-light in the shallow bays on the south side of Long Island.

The places where this fish is found in greatest abundance are about forty miles from the city of New-York. He soon dies after being removed from his element, and in such sultry weather as occurs after June soon spoils. The fishermen, therefore, remove his entrails, lay him in the water of the coldest springs and brooks, and transport him to market during the coolness of night, with all possible speed, in wagons. Notwithstanding these precautions, this excellent fish is frequently spoiled before it can reach the table.

Codfish. There are several species of cod sold alive, from the fishermen's stalls, in the New-York markets. Of these the common cod is the best, and is in season from November till spring. The price varies from three to six cents the pound, as the market is well or scantily supplied. The head and shoulders of a large cod is the best part to grace the dinner-table. The hake and haddock are different species of cod, and are sometimes offered for sale, but they are both inferior to the common cod.

The New-York markets are plentifully supplied with numerous other fish, which are good eating, and sometimes cheap, but are not in such high estimation as the foregoing. We may enumerate young drum, porgees, gurnards, weakfish, flatfish, perch, suckers, &c. Fresh salmon is sometimes, though rarely, obtained from the eastward. Pickled and smoked salmon are common. That exquisite and delicate fresh-water fish, the trout, is taken in the brooks of Long Island, and sometimes makes its appearance in market.

rally a strong, rank flavour. They are in season all the year, except for a short time during the winter.

In a LOBSTER lately caught, you may put the claws in motion by pressing the eyes with your fingers ; but when it has been long caught, that muscular action is not excited. The freshness of boiled lobsters may be determined by the elasticity of the tail, which is flaccid when they have lost any degree of their freshness. Their goodness, independent of freshness, is determined by their weight, the heaviest being always the best.

The goodness of a CRAB is known by its weight, also ; for, when it proves light, the flesh is generally found to be wasted and watery. If in perfection, the joints of the legs will be stiff, and the body will have an agreeable smell. The eyes, by a dull appearance, betray that the crab has been long caught.

SEA CRAY-FISH are good, when they are heavy, and the eye bright ; and have no unpleasant smell.

PRAWNS and SHRIMPS are firm and crisp to the touch when they are good.

In fresh OYSTERS the shell is firmly closed ; if at all opened, the oysters are not fresh. The Colchester, Pyfleet, Milford, are good for eating raw, but the Milton are the best. They are small in the shell, but this is completely filled with the fish. The rock oyster, which is very large, is coarse in flavour, and fit only for stewing or for sauce.

Mrs. L.—By what rules must I be guided in choosing poultry ?

Mrs. B.—In the choice of poultry, the age of the bird is the chief point to which you should attend. A young TURKEY has a smooth black leg ; in an old one, the legs are rough and reddish. If the bird be fresh killed, the eyes will be full and fresh, and the feet moist.

In DOMESTIC FOWLS, the combs and the legs are smooth when the bird is young, and rough when it is old.

The bills and the feet of **GEESE** are yellow, and have a few hairs upon them, when the bird is young; but they are red if it be old. The feet of a goose are pliable when the bird is fresh killed, and dry and stiff when it has been some time killed. Geese are called green till they are two or three months old.

Ducks should be chosen by the feet, which should be supple; and they should, also, have a plump and hard breast. The feet of a tame duck are yellowish, those of a wild one reddish.

PIGEONS should always be eaten while they are fresh: when they look flabby and discoloured about the under-part, they have been kept too long. The feet, like those of most other poultry, show the age of the bird: when they are supple, it is young; when stiff, it is old. Tame pigeons are larger than wild pigeons.

With regard to the age of the **HARE** and the **RABBIT**, when the ears are dry and tough, the haunch thick, and the claws blunt and rugged, they are old. Smooth and sharp claws, ears that readily tear, and a narrow cleft in the lip, are the marks of a young hare. Hares may be kept for some time after they have been killed; indeed, many people think they are not fit for the table, until the inside begins to turn a little. Care, however, should be taken, to prevent the inside from becoming musty, which would spoil the flavour of the stuffing. A leveret is distinguished from a hare by a knob, or small bone, near the foot.

PARTRIDGES have yellow legs, and a dark-coloured bill when young. They are not in season till after the first of September.

These few hints may be useful to you in assisting your observations, by which, indeed, you must chiefly expect to reap much advantage. Mere rules are soon forgotten unless they are frequently called into action.

Mrs. L.—I am very much pleased to learn all these

things, but will it not save me much trouble to accustom my cook to market? Thus, I should compel her to use and improve her judgment on all those points which belong to her department. I cannot acknowledge that good management consists in doing myself, that which I have a right to expect others to perform for me; and, therefore, I shall be giving myself trouble, and expending my time to no advantage, if I do that for which I am in fact keeping a servant.

Mrs. B.—An experienced and confidential housekeeper may be more competent than her mistress to market; but a mere cook is not likely to be equally qualified for the task; for, if she were, she would probably not long continue in the rank of a lower servant. But in either case how are you, without possessing this knowledge yourself, to judge of the competency of others to undertake the charge? How, too, could you consent to be thus dependant on a member of your family, who might leave you at a moment's notice, perhaps at the mercy of one more ignorant than herself, who in her turn might very easily destroy your comfort, and that of your whole household, unless you could direct and instruct her? Believe me, that in all which regards the supplies of provisions, and the stocking of your store-room, you will do wisely to trust only to yourself. Besides the inconveniences and waste which must accompany your cook's want of skill in marketing, there are many temptations to dishonesty, which seem to beset her as soon as she appears at market. Among petty tradespeople, the custom almost generally prevails of giving douceurs to servants, in order to secure their favour and interest with those whom they serve; and I have been told, that old hackneyed cooks will soon discover which of the tradespeople around them are likely to reward them most generously for carrying custom to their shops.

Mrs. L.—This temptation must be ruinous to the honesty of a servant; nor can the principle be commended which

prompts the tradesman thus to allure custom. They must, by some means, reimburse themselves; and one can scarcely doubt but that they add something proportionable to the price of their different commodities.

Mrs. B.—Your market-woman has, also, the power of adding to the price of those things she has herself been charged to buy, without much fear of discovery, especially if she does it prudently, and is satisfied with very small additions at one time. This is by no means an uncommon practice among dishonest servants; and, it is one which, in some instances, has been continued for years undetected. A mortifying circumstance attending this species of fraud is, that the injured parties can never ascertain to what degree they have suffered from it, nor in what proportion their expenditure has been affected by it. This could not have happened, had they been in the habit of occasionally marketing for themselves. By this means, they would have known the usual price of many of the common articles of consumption; and been enabled to detect, early, such fraudulent practices. When these have occurred, I do not know which party may be considered as the greater sufferer of the two:—whether the one who has encountered temptations which she has found too strong to resist, and which have led her on almost to her undoing; or the other party, who, besides the injury her property has sustained from the dishonesty of her servant, discovers that her censurable ignorance has prevented her from having that check upon the conduct of her servant, which, in the moment of hesitation between right and wrong, might have given the impulse in favour of the former.

It is a good plan, and serves as a check both on tradespeople and servants, to have books kept in the kitchen, in which every article is entered that is brought into the house. Each tradesman, such as the butcher, the baker, the green-grocer, the oil-man, and the milkman, should

write down in the book appropriated to him the quantity of the commodity, with its price, which has just been delivered ; and his bill, if correct, will tally with the contents of this book. This custom must be a satisfaction to the honest dealer ; and it is the best method of preventing those disputes which sometimes arise respecting the various items in tradesmen's bills.

Let me recommend you to be very exact in examining and settling these books weekly ; because your memory may then be of use to you, and will assist you to recollect all the articles with which you are charged ; or to rectify any mistakes that may have occurred. The amount of each of these weekly settlements should, afterwards, be entered in your housekeeping-book : and at the end of every month, this housekeeping-book should, in its turn, be added up, and the sum total entered into the cash-book. Thus your housekeeping-book shows you your current expenses for each week ; and the cash-book the amount of the whole monthly, besides including every other expense that occurs to you. The cash-book should be balanced every three months ; by which you will not fail to discover whether you are keeping within bounds, or exceeding the income upon which you propose to live.

Mrs. L.—How do you recommend grocery, and other commodities, which are not, like fish or meat, of a perishable nature, to be purchased ? In small or in large quantities ?

Mrs. B.—Grocery, candles, soap, and many other things, are more advantageously purchased in large quantities, and from wholesale dealers, than by buying them at retail shops, and only for immediate consumption. Candles improve by keeping for a few months, and may be kept even for two years without injury, although that cannot be said to improve them. Those which are made in cool weather are the best ; and some people are careful not to lay in a store of candles at the time of the year in

which they suppose lamb fat to be mixed with the tallow, which they fancy makes the candles soft, and inclined to run. Before you lay in a store either of soap or of candles, it is advisable to inquire from the chandler, who will generally be able to tell you, whether the price is likely to be stationary.

Sometimes a very considerable rise takes place in the price of these articles, in consequence of the circumstances attending the importation of foreign tallow into this country, and of the probability of this rise, the dealers in them generally know beforehand.

SOAP, which also improves by keeping, should be purchased in large quantities, and cut while it is soft into small pieces, each of which should not exceed half a pound in weight. It should be kept in a dry and moderately warm place; and the original stock should always be kept up by half-yearly purchases, so that no soap should be in use which has not been six months in your possession. By such a practice a saving of at least twenty *per cent.* is effected on this article.

GOOD LOAF SUGAR is very bright and clean-looking, with a close, heavy grain. A porous sugar is not an economical one; almost double the quantity that is necessary of a hard close-grained sugar being required to sweeten any thing with it.

MOIST OR RAW SUGAR should be clear and sandy-looking, and not of too dark a colour. A dull, heavy, and dirty-grained sugar is not economical; and, besides being full of molasses, it spoils the flavour of every thing that is sweetened with it.

RICE, or indeed any kind of seed, should not be bought in large quantities, because an insect is apt to breed in it; to prevent which, all kinds of seed should be kept in earthen-ware jars, and covered from the air.

CURRENTS and RAISINS should be chosen by their dry and clean appearance; for, when they are clogged to-

gether, they are generally full of dirt ; and, in washing them, you seem to lose almost half.

The quality of TEA is according to its price. It should not be very small, or have much dust in it. Tea is most economically bought by the chest ; it is cheaper, and more likely to be genuine ; besides, something is gained in the weight, from what is termed tare and tret.

Mrs. L.—Do you recommend me to keep the key of the store-room, and to distribute the stores as they are wanted ? Will it not be very troublesome and annoying to be called away from company, or to be interrupted in my favourite employments, to give out a little sugar, or a pound of candles.

Mrs. B.—Such interruptions would, indeed, be troublesome, and if you were subjected to them, I am afraid no argument of mine would induce you to keep the key of your store-room yourself : but, without giving it in charge to a servant, who may be deficient in frugal notions, if not in honesty, and whom the sight of abundance would be enough to render prodigal, I think you may so arrange your affairs, that you may distribute the stores, and yet enjoy society, and write, read, or draw, free from interruptions of this kind.

My excellent friend, Mrs. T———, a lady of high accomplishments, manages her large family of servants without a housekeeper, with great order ; and, in respect to the distribution of the stores, her rule is, that every servant who wants any thing from the store-room shall ask her for it, during her morning visit to the kitchen ; when, with her keys in hand, she is always ready to attend to their requests. If they omit, from forgetfulness, to make their wants known, at the proper time, she generally refuses to go to her store-room again ; and thus makes them feel the inconvenience of their thoughtlessness. By this regularity on her part, she has brought her servants into similar habits, and no one ever sees her house a scene of

confusion and hurry : every part of the work is performed at its proper season ; and every thing is to be found in its right place, ready at the moment it is wanted. She has, rarely, occasion to trust the keys of her store-room into other hands ; thereby sparing her servants the temptation to injure her. Unless a lady, in becoming her own house-keeper, resolve to be thus exact and regular in transacting that part of the business of her family which, then, necessarily devolves upon her, nothing will go on well ; and no servants either can or will give her satisfaction. In such a case, her family might be better regulated if she were to give up a part of her responsibility ; such, for instance, as the distribution of the stores, to the most confidential person about her ; but by doing this, she renders herself liable to be imposed upon, and relinquishes the opportunity of acquiring a correct knowledge respecting the actual quantity of each article which her family must necessarily consume ; a knowledge which enables her to detect imposition whenever it occurs.

People of high rank are frequently imposed upon ; and their property often suffers much from the dishonesty of their dependants. Their habits do not lead them to pay minute attention to the economy of their households, or to check, by a strict investigation of their household expenditure, the extravagant and dishonest propensities of their servants. I remember hearing of a married couple, who lived together for many years in a noble family, as butler and housekeeper, and who carried on their peculations in concert, to such an extent, that the loss to their employers could not be calculated at less than three hundred a year ; and their practices were known to have been carried on for many years, so that it was hardly possible to say to what extent this robbery had proceeded.

MRS. L.—Such circumstances when brought to light seem to do no one good, and only encourage that distrust and suspicion which are, too constantly, at work in our

pecuniary transactions with our fellow-creatures. It is very mortifying that such unamiable feelings are requisite as weapons of self-defence.

Mrs. B.—But they should be employed only as weapons of self-defence, and not be permitted to wound the feelings of any individual, whether servant or tradesman, until there are grounds upon which distrust must rest. I am convinced that suspicion, when frequently in action, does not prove more injurious to happiness, than to integrity of mind; and that the person who finds himself an object of constant distrust, will lose some portion of his honesty. How miserable is the state of that mind which indulges so unhappy a feeling. I knew a lady formerly, who, during her life, might be thought to anticipate the torments of another world, by the evident state of perplexity and uneasiness to which her suspicious temper had brought her. She never had, according to her own account, an honest servant; and, to say the truth, her domestics, more frequently from the low-desire to outwit her than from dishonest propensities, often afforded her cause for disquietude and vexation.

Another lady, whom I knew, had the satisfaction to correct entirely the inclination to dishonesty which she discovered in a young female servant, by herself showing a spirit quite the reverse of that which I have just mentioned. Upon discovering a theft, which this young woman had committed, she threatened to part with her instantly; but, upon examination, finding that she was friendless, and that, if reduced to extremity, she might be tempted to do worse, the lady resolved to retain her in her service, and afford her the means of redeeming her character. Her chief objection to this measure arose from the state of suspicion in which this act of lenity would involve her, and which she was aware would neither be beneficial to the young woman, nor pleasant to herself. She told the young woman that her suspicions might in-

crease caution on her part, but would not be likely to reform her ; and she added, " I wish I could devise means to banish it from my mind, and to restore to you that share in my confidence of which you have, so unhappily, deprived yourself. Can you venture to rely sufficiently on yourself, so as to give me your solemn promise, that in no future instance you will betray the trust reposed in you ? If you can do this, I will strive to forget your misdemeanour, and by neither word nor action of mine shall you be reminded of it, unless you yourself give occasion to it." This promise was gratefully and fervently made ; and the lady was, deservedly, rewarded by several years of faithful service from her reclaimed servant, who afterwards left her to be married ; but who continued always to evince her steady attachment and gratitude to her mistress by every means in her power.

It is, perhaps, true, that this mild treatment would prove an effectual remedy only in the first steps of sin. Medicine of more potent effect must be tried for old offenders ; but, it certainly would afford peculiar gratification to a humane mind, to believe that it could be the means of reclaiming, by gentle measures, a fellow-creature from any immorality of conduct ; and this gratification almost every female head of a family might enjoy, at least once in her life, if, instead of indulging angry feelings at the misconduct of her dependants, and seeking to punish them, she were to study to reclaim them. But, we have made a long digression from the topic upon which we were engaged. I think I have said enough of the advantages of distributing the stores yourself.

Mrs. L.—Does not a housekeeper consider this as a part of her employment : and how is she to be restrained from the indulgence either of extravagance or of dishonesty, in fulfilling this part of her duty ?

Mrs. B.—I can recommend no better plan than to examine and settle her accounts regularly ; and to make her

explain to your satisfaction any occasional increase of expenditure, which, if you do not thus notice, will most probably occur again, and in a two-fold degree.

Mrs. L.—Do you recommend confectionary to be prepared at home, or to be purchased from the confectioner?

Mrs. B.—If your style of living do not require you to keep a first-rate cook, and if your dinner-parties be not frequent, you will find it more desirable to purchase confectionary, than to endeavour to prepare it at home. It is very expensive in either case; but, in the former, you feel assured of having it well made, and without any trouble to yourself, or loss of time to your servants. Many of these ornamental parts of a dinner require much time and attention, often for several days, previous to their accomplishment; and it is mortifying if, after all the trouble and expense attending them, they betray the workmanship of an awkward hand. For the same reason, the finest kinds of preserves and dried fruits are better purchased as occasional demand them than made at home, unless under the superintendence of a housekeeper or a professed cook.

Common preserves,* such as raspberries, currants, and gooseberries, may be easily made at home, the process being simple; and, unless attended by very great carelessness, the result is sure to be satisfactory. Preserves, even of the most common kind, are very expensive when bought: the confectioner asks six shillings for a pound of raspberry or currant jam, and twelve shillings for the same quantity of apricot, strawberry, and pine-apple. Now, supposing you have to purchase the fruit at a dear rate, you will still find it economical to have the common kinds

* Strawberries, currants, gooseberries, blackberries, and raspberries, are early fruits, and are, in New-York, converted into preserves or jellies, or made into wines, for summer use.

The fruits for winter preserves are plums, peaches, and quinces, which are best and cheapest when made at home by the mistress of a family.

Young cucumbers make the best pickles; but for a change and variety, walnuts, mangoes, beans, beets, and red cabbage, are used. *Amer. Ed.*

of preserves made at home. You may, even in London, purchase strawberries, raspberries, currants, and gooseberries, upon an average, at sixpence per quart. A quart and a half will not, perhaps, when boiled, produce more than a pound of preserve, so much being wasted in the boiling : but if we calculate that for a pound of jam, the fruit costs sixpence, the sugar a shilling, and the jar which is to contain it threepence, there will be no less a difference than four shillings and threepence, between a pound of the confectioner's and of home-made preserves. With a tolerably careful cook, and your own superintendence, there is no great risk of spoiling them in the boiling ; and it is always a satisfaction to know how both pickles and preserves are made ; and to feel assured that the vessels in which they have been boiled were clean and in good order. The chief point to be attended to in preserving fruit is to boil it slowly, and cooks are not always willing to do this, because it lengthens the time required for the process, and exposes them to considerable inconvenience from heat.

Mrs. L.—The management of the wine-cellar does not often belong to the superintendence of women ; but, as it is not desirable for them to be ignorant of any thing which may, perhaps, come under their care, I will not scruple to beg for any information you can give me on this subject. What is considered as the best kind of wine-cellar ?

Mrs. B.—One which, from its situation, is very little liable to undergo any change of temperature, from the variations of heat and cold externally, or to be affected by a damp atmosphere. I have understood that a cellar without windows, or with windows closely shut, and being well cased and floored with bricks, keeps the wine in a more equal temperature than a stone cellar. The cellar should be furnished with brick-binns and catacombs, to each of which a hook should be attached, on which is hung the label importing the kind and the age of the wine. A piece of chalk should lie near the port-wine binns, to mark

the side upon which the wine has been laid, that it may not be turned on the opposite side before it is decanted ; for when, by accident or carelessness, port-wine has been turned over from one side to the other, some of the incrustation of tartar with which the bottle is lined, will break off and render the wine turbid.

In the choice of wines, it is impossible for me to direct you, nor is it necessary. To possess the skill of a connoisseur in deciding upon the various flavours of wines, their strength and body, is not desirable for a female ; and such a talent does not, I hope, owe its birth and education to any feminine propensity. What credit you may derive from the superior merits of your wine, will not, I am sure, be obtained by your own skill and judgment in their choice :—for *that* you must depend upon others.

If the key of the wine-cellar remain always in your own possession, and you undertake to give out the supplies when required, you should keep a cellar-book ; for, as it may be necessary to look out several bottles of various kinds of wine at a time, you should keep a memorandum, that you may discover any defalcation, should such occur, after it has been intrusted to the care of the servant. Some gentlemen prefer to decant their own wines, and will scarcely suffer a servant to touch the bottles. When this is the case, there is less danger of its being used improperly, as most gentlemen would readily recollect the number of bottles uncorked, and the quantity used at table. Wine, from its expensiveness, and the great value set upon it, offers a perpetual temptation to dishonesty among our servants, and is a constant source of suspicion to ourselves : and our vigilance, in guarding the treasure, seems but to increase their desire to enjoy it. I am afraid the present state of things affords no remedy for this evil. What can be procured only by the affluent is sure to be coveted by the poor.

Mrs. L.—Wines are sometimes made from the fruits of

this country ; and I believe Doctor Macculloch has published an excellent treatise on the subject of wine-making, by which any one may be instructed how to conduct the process ; but I have heard, that frequently excellent home-made wines are spoiled by improper methods being taken to preserve them :—can you give any information on the art of keeping wine ?

Mrs. B — This is certainly a subject of some importance should you ever reside in the country. In giving you all the information upon it of which I am mistress, I must suppose that you are already acquainted with wine-making, and are aware, that, although by the first fermentation, the constituents of the juice of whatever fruit is employed are partially decomposed, and that that juice is rendered vinous, and converted into spirit or alcohol ; yet, that an insensible fermentation continues afterwards, by which new combinations are formed, which resist further decomposition. Whatever tends to renew the original fermentation, contributes to spoil the wine by rendering it acescent ; thence, in spring, when there is a transition from cold to heat, and in autumn, when the variations of temperature are frequent and sudden, wine is apt to ferment, an effect arising partly from the corresponding expansion in the body of the liquor which these changes occasion. The first object, therefore, to which we must attend in the keeping of wines, is to have a cellar of such a depth, and in such a situation, that it will not be affected by these transitions ; and probably the best place for this is under the centre of the house. Air in the casks, and the presence of the lees, also contribute to the renewal of the fermentation ; you should, therefore, order your home-made wine to be racked off into clean-casks, at least twice in the year, at the equinoxes, for two successive years, and have it fined after each racking. The addition of brandy in making wine, favours the renewal of the primary fermentation ; and it, also, destroys the aroma and flavour of the wine, which are the qualities

for which all wine is justly prized. The size of the casks is, also, a matter of some importance; for experience has proved, that wines of a strong and full body, such as *port*, which contain much tartar, and mucilaginous extractive matter, are most effectually mellowed and preserved in large casks; while the finer and lighter wines, such as the French white wines, improve most in vessels of a moderate capacity.

Wines should never be bottled until after the whole of the free, mucilaginous, extractive matter, and the greater part of the tartar which they contain, have been deposited; and they have become so clear as to require no fining immediately before the process of bottling. When they are bottled, they should be deposited in a cellar as little affected by the temperature of the air and external circumstances, as that in which they have been kept while in the cask. The goodness of the corks, also, is a matter of the first importance in bottling wine; and no economy is so misplaced as that which would lead to save money on this article. For some wines, however, which have been made with very ripe and good fruit, but are nevertheless rather thin, it is preferable to tie damp bladders over the mouths of the bottles than to cork them, placing the bottles, of course, on end. By this operation, a portion of the aqueous part of the fluid escapes through the bladder, while the spirit, being retained, bears a more equal proportion to the water than was originally the case; the flavour of the wine becomes more mellow, and the fragranciness of the aroma more perceptible. Some diminution, undoubtedly, takes place in the quantity of the fluid; but, from a trial made by the author of "The History of Ancient and Modern Wines," from the perusal of whose excellent works I have culled the greater part of my information on this subject, it would appear, that the loss is comparatively trifling. I will read you the passage. "Some Rhenish wine which has now been undergoing

the operation for six years, in common quart bottles, shows a diminution of about three ounces in each bottle. The specific gravity of the residue is augmented; and the increased quantity of acid and spirit bears a very exact relation to the quantity of water that has disappeared. On comparing this wine with some of the same vintage, which had remained in corked bottles, its flavour and aroma had become so much more mellow and fragrant, that I had some difficulty in persuading myself of the original similarity of the two samples.”*

Many objections have been preferred to home-made wines; but, were the process of making them properly conducted; were they not adulterated with brandy; were they carefully attended to while they remain in the wood; and were they bottled at a due period, and not drunk too soon after they are bottled, I believe that some of them would be found equal, if not superior, in flavour and other good qualities, to many of the continental wines, at least such as are imported into this country. My good old friend, Mrs. H——, has some grape wine which was made, about eighteen years since, from *sweet-water* grapes, grown in the open air, and which were extremely well ripened that season; and I assure you, that excellent judges admit, that it is not inferior to the best Rhenish which they have met with in England. I once tasted some white currant wine which had been four years in bottle, and was equal to the best *vin de grave*; and I know no reason why wine carefully made in England of good raisins, and properly kept, should be inferior to the sweet wine made from the same grape, in its dried state, in the country where it grows.

Mrs. L.—What kind of room is best adapted to preserve fruit for winter use; such as stores of apples, pears, and nuts, of different kinds?

* *History of Ancient and Modern Wines*, 4to. Lond. 1894. p. 336.

Mrs. B.—If your establishment be large, and the house you occupy permit it, you should have both a *fruit and root cellar*, and a *fruit-room*. In both the temperature should be low (between 32° and 40° Fah.), and always as nearly of the same degree as possible.

The cellar, as I have already said of your wine-cellar, should be partly below the ground, and have double or treble sashes to the windows, which should be small; and a double door. It should be fitted with cells or binns like a wine cellar, and also have a pit and divisions on the floor, which should be partially filled with sand.

The fruit-room should be boarded, and very dry. An airy room is desirable, but it should have double sashes in the windows, and double outer doors, both of which should be closed in damp or frosty weather. The room should be fitted up with shelves made of spars, which should be spread over with reeds, or very large clean straw, and beneath should be drawers with double bottoms, also made of spars.

There are various methods of preserving fruit. Pears and apples, the most useful fruit in a family, are best preserved in glazed, cylindrical, earthen vessels, large enough to contain a gallon, and closely fitted with covers. One kind of apple or of pear only should be put into the same jar, which should be labelled, to prevent the necessity of opening it to ascertain the kind of fruit it contains. Each apple or pear should be wiped dry, then rolled in soft, bibulous, or spongy paper, and placed carefully in the jar, on which, when it is full, the cover should be cemented, by means of a cement composed of two parts of the curd of skimmed milk and one of lime. These jars may be kept either in the cellar or the room; but the former is the preferable situation. Pears thus preserved, will keep until February and March; but they should be taken from the jars about ten days before they are wanted for the table, and placed on the shelves of the fruit-room, and

ultimately removed into a warmer room for the last three days.

Baking-apples, after they have been gathered a few days, and have, as the gardener would say, perspired, should be wiped and laid on a dry floor or shelf, and covered over with a *linen* cloth, which secures them from damp and frost. A woollen cloth will not answer the same purpose; and straw, which is commonly placed over them, gives them a musty and disagreeable taste. Baking pears may be kept in the same manner; but when they are of a large kind, with a strong stalk, they keep much better if they are tied to a string across the ceiling. Apples and pears for baking may be also preserved in hampers or baskets lined with thick paper;* and when this method is adopted, the fruit should not be allowed to perspire, but be carried directly from the tree, and packed, carefully avoiding all sorts of bruising, and rejecting every bruised fruit. One sort of fruit only should be put into each hamper, which should be labelled. Bunches of grapes may be preserved for some time in jars; but each bunch should be wrapped up in soft paper, and every layer of these bunches in the jar covered with well dried bran. The mouth of the jar should be covered with a bladder, or the lid be cemented on in the manner already described. But the best method of preserving grapes, is to gather the bunches on the branch to which they are attached, which should be cut about six inches from the bunch, and have both ends of it sealed with common sealing-wax. These should then be hung across lines in the fruit-room, taking care, occasionally, to examine them, and clip out, with a pair of scissors, any berries that appear mouldy. If grapes which are not over-ripe be preserved in this manner, they will keep until February. Other and more delicate fruits may also be preserved by wiping them dry to clear away

* Apples are preserved in barrels, and kept in rooms where they will not freeze

the moisture which they yield after gathering, and then placing them in earthen jars, and covering them with layers of dry sand of about an inch in thickness. Each jar should be well filled, closed with cement, and placed in the fruit-room or a cool place, but where it cannot be affected by frost. When fruit has been frost-bitten, it should be put into cold water, which will recover it, if it be suffered to remain in it a sufficient time. Walnuts and filberts may be preserved in jars with the covers cemented to keep out the air.*

Mrs. L.—You mentioned roots. How are these to be kept for the winter's supply?

Mrs. B.—Onions and bulbs should be laid loosely on the shelves of the fruit-cellar; potatoes should be buried in a pit sunk at the bottom of the cellar, and covered over with dry sand; and turnips and carrots laid in the divisions at the bottom of the cellar, and covered with sand. Cabbages, endive, lettuces, and similar plants, also, may be preserved throughout the winter, in a state fit for use, if they be taken out of the ground with their main roots entire, in perfectly dry weather, at the end of the season, and partially immersed in dry sand. If these and the potatoes be not put into the fruit-cellar, which might be inconvenient, they should be kept in a close dry cellar, of an ice-cold temperature.†

I must now ask *you* one question. Have you provided yourself with a cookery-book?

Mrs. L.—Certainly. I have purchased Mrs. Rundle's and the *Cook's Oracle*. How could I go on for one day without them? Yet my study of these important books is not always satisfactory, nor are the effects produced from them at all equal to my expectations. Sometimes a

* These nuts, if perfectly ripe and dry, require nothing more than to be put into barrels, as the air will not hurt or rot them.

† Much information on the subject of gathering and preserving vegetables and fruit will be found in *Loudon's Encyclopædia of Gardening*.

dish far too rich is the result ; and at other times I have to complain of defects completely opposite, and yet my cook informs me that the receipts are strictly followed.

Mrs. B.—Your experience will in time rectify this inconvenience ; and you will find, that, by taking the medium of most receipts, you will avoid it. Good and well-flavoured dishes must be formed of good materials, and in sufficient quantity : but it is not necessary to have this principle carried to an extreme ; and, as it is not well always to follow these receipt-books implicitly, I recommend you to form one for yourself, of such receipts as you have found it expedient to modify, and which may be done advantageously, as your own experience shall prove to you. I like to have a book of this kind at hand, in which I can insert any useful hints I may occasionally gather in conversing with others, or by my own observations. The various concerns of the day would soon make me forget them, if I did not thus record them in my little book. Besides receipts and directions in household affairs, such a book may contain many useful hints and remarks respecting that part of the management of an illness which does not belong to the province of the medical attendant : such as modes to prevent infection ; receipts for various pleasant beverages ; methods of making and applying fomentations ; and remarks upon many other things, which at the first view may appear trivial, but which become important when they enable any one to add to the comfort or to alleviate the pains of an invalid. But it is time to separate ; and I must now, for the present, say farewell.

CONVERSATION VI.

HEALTH AND DISEASE.—MANAGEMENT OF EVERY BRANCH OF THE FAMILY, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE FORMER.—PERSONAL SICKNESS.—SICKNESS OF HUSBAND—OF CHILDREN—OF SERVANTS.—PRECAUTIONS IN CONTAGIONS.—INFECTIOUS AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES.—MEDICAL ATTENDANTS.—SICK NURSES.—COOKERY OF THE SICK ROOM.—PREPARATIONS FOR THE LYING-IN ROOM—MONTHLY NURSES.—MANAGEMENT OF A CHILD IN THE MONTH.—REMARKS ON VACCINATION.

Mrs. B.—The best means of preserving health (as far as human means can prevail), is the subject to which I wish now to draw your attention. It has been truly said, that none can appreciate the blessing of health until they have experienced its loss ; and then only do they sincerely acknowledge that no other good, such as rank, power, beauty, or wealth, can stand in competition with it. Yet, not even this conviction has strength sufficient to prevent the almost constant sacrifice of health to some lesser good. Thus we see many rapidly expending their strength in the pursuit of riches, or in the attainment of rank and power ; and when acquired, and they find themselves at the point they desired to attain, they discover also, that the power of enjoyment has not accompanied these blessings ; thus, faltering limbs receive no vigour from a bed of down, and thus the choicest viands want the relish which unimpaired digestion alone can bestow. How many would gladly resign the product of all their toils and cares, could they exchange it for a portion of that health and vigour with which they set out in life ! Health is the gift of God ; yet how willing we are to barter it, and what exertions do

we daily make to drive it from us, and to substitute in its place the flimsy gifts this world can give us! Whatever God has bestowed upon us it is our duty to employ worthily. Gratitude to Him, and our own interest, both demand it. Overstrained exertions and application may bring wealth into a family, but, if it bring disease also, what happiness or real good can accompany it? It is rarely that a diseased body does not also cause a mind to be distempered in some degree or other, especially when the disease is produced by the sacrifice of a great for a comparatively trifling good. Selfishness, unreasonable expectations and desires, disappointed hopes, having their origin from this source, have imbittered the happiness of many a domestic circle, and have had an injurious effect upon the character of every one of its members. According to the disposition of each, some defect has been engendered: dissimulation in one, and ill-humour and discontent in others. A father thus abandoning himself to the pursuit of wealth or distinction, and giving up the only enjoyment which could render his acquisitions valuable to himself, introduces evils in his family for which nothing can compensate. A mother, too, if, in seeking for amusement, loses her health, and thereby unfits herself for the performance of her domestic duties, is even more censurable, inasmuch as the object she pursues terminates in a temporary and fruitless gratification of self: nor is there much difference between the woman who, wilfully, and without cause, neglects to fulfil her duties, and the one who, by folly and imprudence, deprives herself of the power of doing them. The effects are the same.

Mrs. L.—But, my dear madam, carelessness and imprudence in regard to health appear to me to be minor defects, or, at least, to be less annoying, than those produced by over solicitude. I have known some people in a constant state of anxiety about themselves, and suffering no one near them to be at ease. At every varying sensa-

tion, they anticipated the commencement of some dire disease, which they racked themselves and all their relatives with the anxious desire to obviate. One poor unhappy lady I have heard of, seldom fancied herself to have less than *three mortal* diseases upon her at one time, any one of which, had she really been afflicted with it, would shortly have terminated her life ; and yet she lived many years, but without imparting or receiving happiness. Indeed, I think you should more strongly warn against a too sedulous care of health than against the contrary error.

Mrs. B.—I am very far from desiring to recommend this undue solicitude which in fact destroys its purpose, and which, if the body be not diseased, renders the mind so. Every blessing may, by being over-valued, end in becoming a torment. This over-care to preserve health, when habitual, is as great an evil, indeed it is worse, than a regular illness, because it is not likely to be cured. Medicine gives no relief to it : mental and bodily exertion are the only remedies, and they are the only remedies, too, which the sufferer is either unwilling or unable to try. The hypochondriac is indeed a pitiable being ; yet whether his sufferings proceed from indulgence of feelings, or from some hidden malady, I suppose it is not possible to know. But, if there are any means by which this dis-tempered state may be avoided, they must arise from ourselves, and be resorted to the moment that any symptoms are perceptible.

With our sex, I suspect, this complaint has its commencement at an early period in our lives, and often receives encouragement from our own folly and weakness, and from the very mistaken notion, that a delicate constitution and a feeble body render us interesting to others ; and thus many hysterical and nervous affections are encouraged and strengthened, until they are scarcely to be subdued. From some cause or other, women seem pecu-

liarly subject to hysterical feelings. Whether these originate from an effeminate education, or a delicate organization, I do not know; but I do know it to be a fact, that a little exertion and resolution will subdue and lessen the force of such attacks, while, on the contrary, without this resistance, they will increase and strengthen until they amount to an obstinate and troublesome state of disease. When hysterical symptoms appear in young people, it is the duty of those near them, to point out to them, in a serious manner, the danger of abandoning themselves to these feelings; and when this advice does not prove sufficient to urge them to resistance, some more decided measures should be resorted to, before the attacks gain too great a head. A young lady of a delicate constitution was for some weeks subject to an hysterical spasm, which came on every evening, and each time with increased strength. Her friends at length called in a very sensible physician, who perceiving his patient was not otherwise diseased, although far from being strong, determined not to humour her friends, whose apprehensions led them to wish that only gentle and soothing measures should be adopted. He, therefore, ordered cataplasms to be applied to her feet the moment the spasm came on, which immediately irritated her to such a degree, that she roused herself from the attack. The next evening, at the stated time, symptoms of the fit again appeared, and at the same instant the bell was rung to order the cataplasms to be prepared, upon which the symptoms disappeared instantly, and never attacked her again. It is upon the same principle that hysterical fits have been sometimes cured by fright, or by saving a quantity of cold water thrown over the patient.

Some women, whom I have known, have given way to hysterics whenever they imagined that they could gain some point either with a husband or father by appearing ill. But as these are truly ebullitions of passion, and not the effect of disease, they are too contemptible to be

noticed, and can only cause regret that the individuals who practise them should ever obtain their ends. They who can work upon the feelings of their friends in this manner, and who, to gain some trifling object, avail themselves of such unworthy means, must not expect much commiseration, if in time these attacks come upon them unbidden, and at unseasonable moments.

Many women talk too much of their complaints, forgetting how little interesting the subject can be to their auditors, and how useless to themselves. Indeed it is worse than useless; it is pernicious. One great aim, which we should always have in view, is to withdraw our thoughts as much from ourselves as possible, and to give them such objects for their employment as will enlarge our minds, and improve our hearts: or if we turn them inwardly on ourselves, they should be directed to the task of self-examination, to discover wherein we have erred, and in what weaknesses we indulge. But, instead of doing this, our thoughts are most generally frivolously employed; and never can this be said with more truth than when we permit them to dwell upon trifling feelings of indisposition. To these most women are subject more or less; but they suffer the least from them, who endeavour, by the aid of useful and cheerful occupations, to give them no attention. If the poet tells a truth, who says,

"To dally long on subjects mean and low,
Shows a weak mind, or quickly makes it so,"

we ought to beware how we employ our thoughts in any unprofitable manner, and especially when we consider that even the most serious and useful of our employments, do not, like those of men, call the powers of our minds into much exercise. Alas! could we recall all the thoughts that have passed through our minds, from the moment when we began to think, to the present, and could we separate

the vain and the childish, from the useful and the commendable,—the tares from the wheat,—what a melancholy truth would be told us ! What a mass of folly would there be on one side, and what an atom of good on the other !

But to return to our subject :—next to the weakness of dwelling upon our own complaints, is that of fancying our children to be subject to an endless variety of complaints. To be anxious about the health of our children is very natural ; and, even when it is carried to an extreme, is more excusable than the same degree of solicitude about our own healths ; but neither to this should we give way ; since by doing so we should encourage a thousand fancies totally useless to our children, and very annoying and troublesome to every one else near us. A fit of ill temper, the indulgence of caprice in a spoiled child, or the sullenness which any disappointment may cause in young people whose minds are badly regulated, are often attributed to disease by weak mothers ; and the cure of these serious evils intrusted to medical agents, instead of moral management. A pale cheek or heavy eyes in an infant, which probably have arisen from disturbed sleep or some other slight cause, I have seen awaken many unfounded apprehensions, and cloud over for a day the countenances of a whole family. Be assured, that symptoms of serious illnesses are generally of a more decided nature, and of these it is of course desirable to take immediate notice, and to call in advice.

Now let me remark to you, that to preserve the health of your family, you must keep two means in view ; the first, to *promote* health by good and regular habits, and the second to *prevent*, by proper precautions, the attacks of disease.

Regularity in every habit is a mode by which health may be promoted, and of this your own experience has, I am persuaded, already convinced you. You have known young women, once healthy and vigorous, become feeble,

drooping, and spiritless, when their early regular and temperate habits have been broken through, and when, by joining the circles of fashion, they have turned the hours of rest into the seasons for gayety and amusement. Late and irregular hours of going to bed are much against the preservation of the health, and particularly so from their destroying the wholesome habit of early rising. This habit cannot in every case be continued regularly after marriage, since many impediments may render it impracticable. But, with children, the habit both of going to bed soon, and of rising early, should be enforced. For half the year at least, the morning air, so pure and bracing, cannot fail to be useful to them; and, even with tender children, the heated, relaxing bed, should be quitted each day as early as possible. Besides the advantage to be gained in respect to health by rising early, it fixes in children a habit which they may be able to preserve at a later period of their lives, when they become aware of all the advantages attending it. I do not believe that health is so much affected by our having only a short allowance of sleep, as it is by the irregular hours we keep. Indeed it is almost as injurious, both to the mind and the body, to have too much sleep, as it is to have too little. We cannot eat too much without suffering from it, neither can any other habit of self-indulgence be enjoyed with impunity. Too much sleep excites feverishness, occasions feelings of lassitude and weakness, and often causes head-ache. Many complain of these feelings who would lose them directly if they were to rouse themselves early, and take some pleasant exercise at that refreshing time of the day, instead of fancying themselves weak, requiring more rest, and turning themselves round, and

"Folding their arms for a little more slumber."

Some medical men will tell you, that for persons in health,

six hours of sleep are sufficient, and that more is injurious. As the creatures of habit, I have no doubt that we might form ours in any manner we choose; and if so, what a desirable habit that must be to cultivate, by which we should rescue so many hours, hitherto useless to us, and add them to our hours of usefulness and enjoyment.

In some cases of illness, and of a valetudinarian state of health, more indulgence in respect to sleep may be necessary; but this must depend entirely on the nature of the complaint, for in some constitutions this indulgence rather enervates and weakens than assists to restore health.

Children and old people require more sleep than the middle-aged; but in both cases, going early to bed is far better than lying late. Children whose growing limbs are always in action during the day, require that the hours allotted to them for sleep should be proportioned to the exercise they take. For instance, before the age of nine or ten years, they should never set up beyond eight o'clock, nor be in bed after six o'clock in summer mornings. In the winter nature seems to direct that a greater portion of our time should be spent in sleep; and I think this peculiarly applies to children, who are generally more drowsy in cold than in temperate weather. Nor can I see any advantage in rousing children before it is light, and before the rooms into which they are taken have had time to get warmed by the fire. When little children are suffered to chill after getting up, they are liable to become habitually cross and fretful in the morning; and nothing will appease them until they have had their warmth renewed by breakfast. In some nurseries I have known this habitual fretfulness to have been a cause of great vexation to both nurses and parents, and to have occasioned habits of peevishness in the children which could not be easily broken.

It seems scarcely necessary, in these days, to recommend cleanliness as a great promoter of health; yet I must observe that washing children with abundance of cold water

from head to foot, while their age permits it, is a wholesome and bracing habit. I have seen this practised in a nursery of children, who from the age of two years to five and six, stood each morning in a tub, while, with a large sponge, the contents of a jug of water were showered over them, and no children could look more wholesome and healthy than these little ones did after this copious washing. Besides this, they were washed in a tub of warm water once every week, which was necessary, notwithstanding the daily washings. After the diurnal washings they were rubbed briskly and thoroughly dry, by which the circulation of the blood through all the smaller vessels near the surface was promoted, and a glow produced all over them.

The extremities of even healthy, and particularly of fat children, are liable to be chilled; for which friction, either with the hand or flesh-brush, should be employed; and this practice is particularly desirable for infants whose circulation is not always perfect. After washing, a good nurse-maid will rub the limbs and back of a young infant, not only until it is perfectly dry, but until a gentle glow has been produced; and the exercise thus afforded it will promote its health and growth as much as that which it receives from its nurse when it is a little older, and when good nursing consists, in some measure, in being as active as possible. Some kind of exercise is necessary in every period of life, and gentle friction is that which is peculiarly adapted to the two or three first months of the life of an infant, who very early shows signs of pleasure during this operation.

The hair of children should never be allowed to grow very long or thick, both on account of not encouraging too much heat in the head, and of not having a great mass of hair to dry when their heads are washed, which is the best method of cleansing them, and which should be done, at least, once or twice in the week. The head of an

infant who has not much hair may be washed every day. when the hair becomes long and thick it cannot very conveniently be done so often, because it renders it a fatiguing business for the child to have the head rubbed sufficiently dry ; and unless the hair be very well dried, there is some danger of cold being caught, and affecting either the sight or the hearing. On this account many ladies object to having their children's heads washed ; but, when it is done carefully, and the hair is kept short, there can be no fear of its causing any bad effects ; and, indeed, I think that children, who have been accustomed to the practice, are not so liable to take cold as those are who have not been used to it.

MRS. L.—Regular meals are, I suppose, essential to the health of children ?

MRS. B.—We all, both young and old, feel the good effects of regularity in our habits, and it is desirable to maintain this regularity as far as we are able ; at the same time, it is as important to us to be able to forego it as occasion may demand. During our lives, we are frequently forced to deviate from our usual proceedings ; sometimes, we are called upon to give up a portion of our hours of sleep, and at other times we find ourselves obliged to abstain from food for longer periods than those to which we are accustomed. In bringing up our children we should keep in mind their liability to these deviations, and not render them unfit to endure them by a too careful and delicate treatment. Whatever system seems best calculated to keep them in health, and to promote the growth of their bodies while young, must prove the best plan also for laying the foundation of that vigour of mind and body which, in later life, will carry them through any trials of strength which they may be required to sustain.

In the first place, we must remember, that if the organs of digestion be impaired, the whole system will feel the effects of their derangement : the strength will diminish,

the growth of the body will be stopped, and other complaints will probably ensue. Nothing is so likely to prevent this mischief as great regularity in the hours of eating. The meals of children should be at equal intervals from each other ; and they should not be allowed to have any thing to eat between their meals. It is, I have been told, almost as injurious as poison, though it may be slower in its effects, to throw into the stomach fresh food, while its previous contents are undergoing the process of digestion. The consequence then is, that the food last eaten passes off in a half-digested state, without conveying proper nourishment to the blood, but producing injury to the vessels through which it is carried off. Healthy children, from the age of six or eight months to that of three years, will not require food to be given to them more frequently than every three hours : and, after three years of age, the interval between their meals may be extended to four hours.

The food of which their meals are composed should be good of its kind, and it ought to be plainly dressed. Milk and bread afford the best breakfast and supper for children ; plain, roasted, or boiled meat, or occasionally broiled meat, sometimes fish, and a light pudding, with a few vegetables, are the materials of which the dinners of children should generally consist. Meat for the nursery should be procured as tender as possible, and never taken from the coarse and strong parts. The old meats, such as mutton and beef, are considered more nutritious and easier of digestion than the young meats, such as lamb and veal. Salt meat should never be given to children. Fish is light and nutritious, and may occasionally serve as a little change. Of vegetables, potatoes are most commonly given to children ; but they are, often, the very worst food for them. While new they are indigestible, but may, during a considerable part of the year, be so prepared as not to be improper food for children. Let the potatoes be very well boiled, and, after

pouring the water away from them, cover them over with a clean cloth kept for that purpose, and let them stand close by the fire until the steam be absorbed by the cloth.* Have a deep earthen pan, and a wooden spoon, ready by the fire, and boil above half a pint of milk ; and when the potatoes are ready and peeled, put them into the earthen pan, and mash them with the wooden spoon, mixing a little of the hot milk in by degrees, until the whole quantity be quite free from lumps. A little salt should be added. Cabbage which is well boiled, cauliflowers, French beans, and turnips, are among the vegetables which may be given to children along with animal food, and are more wholesome than potatoes ; but raw vegetables, such as cucumbers, celery, and radishes, should never be given to them ; indeed, cos-lettuce is the only uncooked vegetable that they should be allowed to eat. Rice prepared in different ways, bread, millet, or arrow-root puddings, light custard puddings, and fruit baked with a little sugar, are to be preferred to richer and other kinds of puddings, or to tarts of pastry. Children should never have any food given them which will tempt them to eat more than the appetite demands ; and, indeed, they will seldom desire more unless they are pampered by delicacies.

Mrs. L.—The propensity which parents, and, indeed, people in general, have to encourage in children the disgusting failing of gluttony, by making their chief gratification and rewards consist in presents of cakes, fruits, or confectionary, has always appeared to me very unaccountable. They are, thus, betrayed doubly to injure themselves, both in their dispositions and in their health.

Mrs. B.—Although the food of children should be generally simple, and such as will not tempt them to eat more than is proper, yet, I am not sure that parents are wrong in *occasionally* gratifying the natural inclination of their

* A steamer will answer the same end.

offspring for sweetmeats and cakes ; because, instead of being fostered into a vice, it may, by judicious management, be directed to the cultivation of some of the most amiable qualities that can adorn human nature. I have known children who, without the appearance of prompting or effort on the part of their parents, have, at a very early period of their lives, been taught to prefer a higher gratification to the enjoyment of their palate ; and, while resigning a portion, and sometimes the whole, of any tempting gift they had received, to a younger sister or brother, they have shown themselves capable of fully enjoying and appreciating the pleasures of benevolence, procured by the sacrifice of their own gratification.

Besides the habits, already recommended, of early hours, cleanliness, and regular meals, health may be promoted by cheerfulness and good humour ; and particularly in the case of children, who are easily affected by the circumstances around them. Melancholy and gloomy impressions, by depressing their spirits, deprive them of their natural inclination for active and cheerful employments, which are requisite to maintain their whole system in order. Any circumstances which have a tendency to excite alarm and create anxiety in the minds of children, should not be, unnecessarily, imparted to them ; and any cause for habitual anxiety, such as having a nurse-maid peculiarly disagreeable to a child, so as to render him dull and unhappy whenever he is with her, should undoubtedly be removed. Whatever destroys cheerfulness in the nursery, will injure the health of its little inhabitants. A broken spirit will certainly be the forerunner of a weakened body. An occasional impression, however, of gloom, will not produce any permanently injurious effect. With children it is happily, indeed,—“the tear forgot as soon as shed ;” but an habitual state of depression should be carefully avoided.

Mrs. L.—By what means may illness be prevented, or, rather, how may the direct causes of disease be avoided ?

Mrs. B.—Sudden transitions from heat to cold, or from cold to heat, which, in the one case, lowers too hastily and, in the other, increases too rapidly, the force of the circulation, occasion what is commonly called taking cold. All medical men, knowing how many serious evils spring from this cause, which, sometimes, either directly produces disease, or, in habits where disease is latent, excites it, caution every one to beware of sudden alternations of heat and cold; but without much effect, for the generality of people are negligent in the extreme on this point, flattering themselves, that, as colds are often of no importance, and are attended with no other inconvenience than a few days' indisposition, precaution is needless. To those concerned in promoting the health of a family, these precautions ought not to be considered as useless; especially when the health of children is concerned, to whom feverish colds and coughs are very troublesome, and cause, to those who have the charge of them, much anxiety and fatigue.

Exposure to currents of air, when the body is heated, as well as other sudden alternations of heat to cold, sitting or sleeping in a newly scoured room, remaining too long near an open window in damp evenings, and putting on damp linen, are among the causes of cold. It is true, that we may often be guilty of these imprudences, and yet not experience inconvenience; but we ought not to found our security on this circumstance, for it is probable that, at another time, there may be in us a greater susceptibility of cold, and we may be caught unawares.

Another precaution is to avoid unwholesome diet, which being productive of indigestion, acidity in the stomach, and loss of appetite, a disordered state of the stomach and bowels is the consequence, which, unless it can be speedily corrected, gives birth to a long train of diseases. The kinds of food likely to produce these complaints are highly seasoned and rich dishes, such as ragouts, fricassees, har-

rices, and meats dressed with curry powder. Buttered toast, rich pastry, and confectionary, also belong to this list of prohibitions; nor do I think it should be considered as national prejudice to include in it French cookery: indigestion, with all its evil train, is not likely to be less common while that continues fashionable. Most of the dishes dressed after the French manner consist, generally, of meats stewed until all the nutritious part is withdrawn from them and centered in the gravy, which generally contains, also, ingredients of an oily description, giving a richness to the viands of a most indigestible nature. Oily substances are heavy for healthy, and are peculiarly unsuited to delicate stomachs.

Airy rooms are very favourable in promoting health and cheerfulness. It is not in the power of every one to command equal advantages in this respect; but all may endeavour to keep their apartments clean, free from disagreeable odours, and may, also, contrive to have their windows open at proper seasons, that a change of air may be obtained. Sleeping rooms, particularly, require the free admission of air. In damp weather this should, in every case, be done with caution, especially when a bed stands near the window. In such a case it is better to omit opening the window, but to admit as much change of air as you can by keeping the doors open. In the winter season, all windows in sleeping rooms should be closed by three o'clock in the afternoon.

Mrs. L.—You have cautioned me against being too readily alarmed by slight indispositions in my family, but how are the symptoms of more serious illnesses to be known? Any neglect of these would, I suppose, be likely to increase their violence?

Mrs. B.—Medical advice cannot be too soon obtained when any symptoms of a violent disease appear; such as fevers and inflammatory complaints; and with the symptoms of these, every female, at the head of a family, should

be, in some degree, acquainted, that mischief may not arise from neglect.

Fevers begin with languor, lassitude, and other symptoms indicating debility ; then follow pain in the head, sometimes vomiting, shiverings, great heat of skin, thirst, and an irregular pulse. These symptoms generally usher in continued fevers, which are of different kinds ; such as bilious remittent fever, nervous fever, and typhus. Inflammatory fever is generally symptomatic, and is characterized by a throbbing, heavy pain in the head, great continued heat of the body, the face red, the pulse full, hard, and quick, and great thirst. The mind is, sometimes, affected, and the rest always disturbed.

The *Scarlet Fever* commences with chilliness, shiverings, sore throat, and head-ache ; and afterwards the skin becomes partially covered with a scarlet eruption.

Measles, in the commencement, resemble an ordinary cold or catarrh. The individual is attacked with shiverings, which are followed by great heat, head-ache, and heaviness. The eyes appear dull, inflamed, watery, and unable to bear the light. The nostrils run, and there is frequent sneezing. Sometimes the fever is preceded by a cough, tightness across the chest, slight nausea, and occasional vomiting. These symptoms continue for four or five days, when the eruption appears, first on the temples, forehead, and face, and afterwards over the body. It differs from the rash of scarlet fever in being slightly raised, or papular, and the blotches assuming the form of a horse-shoe.

Inflammation of the Bowels is known by a fixed pain in them, increased by pressure, and attended occasionally with vomiting, costiveness, and fever.

Pleurisy, or inflammation of the lining membrane of the chest, begins with shiverings, which are succeeded by difficulty of breathing, coughs, stitches, or pain in the chest, particularly when breathing or coughing.

Putrid sore Throat commences with alternate chills and heats, pain and heaviness in the head, and other symptoms of fever; and the throat, when examined, appears ulcerated.

The *Hooping-Cough* appears at first to be only a common cough, but gradually becomes more violent, and at last is convulsive. While the paroxysm is upon the patient, he coughs until the whole of the air in the lungs is expelled, after which it again rushes in violently to supply the vacuum; and the inspiration is attended with a peculiar noise, as if of violent suction, which is termed the hoop, and has given the name to the complaint.

When symptoms such as I have described appear in your family, it is necessary to seek for medical assistance. I need not caution you against the danger of trifling with complaints of so serious a nature, by attempting to administer remedies of your own suggesting. If we consider experience as a requisite in our medical attendant, how can we find sufficient confidence in ourselves to act without him on occasions so urgent, when we perhaps recollect that our own experience is confined to the knowledge of two or three cases? Even greater danger may arise from calling in ignorant and irregular practitioners. Such men establish their reputation by the boldness of their measures, which kill rather than cure. It is surprising that so much infatuation prevails in this country, in favour of these irregular practitioners, many of whom, if they have any knowledge at all, must have obtained it by intuition: yet, people will have the folly to resort to them, and to reject men whose lives have been spent in alternate study and practice, in order to fit them for this important profession. It is not just to the regular practitioner to encourage these spurious offsets; and it is injurious to society to do any thing which shall increase their numbers, or give them confidence with the multitude.

Whenever sickness enters your family, whether in your

nursery, with your husband, or among your domestics, you should, by evincing a lively interest in it yourself, encourage the whole of your family to consider it as one common concern. It is true that all cannot be occupied, immediately, about the invalid, but each may show a proper feeling, by desiring to take some share of the increased business of the house, and by the readiness with which they submit to the many inconveniences which an illness must occasion. Where there are daughters old enough to share the fatigues of nursing, they should be urged to the task for their own sakes; for they will find the knowledge which they may gain on these occasions to be invaluable when they become wives and mothers. Besides this, the bed of sickness conveys to all of us, in a forcible manner, many important truths; gives us a lesson in fortitude and resignation, and obliges us to practise patience and forbearance.

Mrs. L.—Indeed I am entirely of your opinion, that the daughters in a family should be early initiated in the duties of the sick-room; or rather, that they should not, as is most usual, be banished from it, as if the experience which they might acquire in it would be injurious to them instead of furnishing them with useful and salutary lessons. I have heard ladies argue, that it would be wrong to depress the spirits of young people, by making them witnesses of painful and sorrowful scenes, and that their days of trouble would occur soon enough, without making them participators in those of their parents.

Mrs. B.—It is a mistaken notion of indulgence in a mother to exclude her daughters from such scenes, when they occur in her own family; and it is an indulgence for which the daughters can scarcely be grateful when they become wives and mothers themselves, and stand in need of that knowledge and experience which they might have obtained under the parental roof.

If a husband be ill, how natural and right it is that his

wife should be his chief nurse and attendant. It is true, his illness may be so protracted, that she may be unable to undergo the entire charge and fatigue of attending upon him ; yet she should be ever ready to superintend the conduct of the nurses under her ; and should, herself, administer his medicines. This little act of attention on her part, if it cannot add to their efficacy, will, at least, render them less disagreeable to the invalid, than if they were presented to him by the hands not interested in their effect. There are many other of those little offices, too, which may be more comfortably and agreeably performed by a wife, than they can be by any other individual ; and she should never, unless for some very good cause, leave these to the hired nurse. When illness attacks either her husband or her children, she will be better able to undergo the fatigue attending it, if she give herself up to it as much as she possibly can. To some of her other duties she must, perhaps, devote a portion of her time ; but, certainly, all engagements of amusement, whether at home or abroad, she should entirely forego. In such a case she ought, indeed, to consider any pleasure as irksome, and should give it up from inclination, rather than from a sense of duty ; for a woman of an affectionate disposition could not, surely, receive any gratification from her usual amusements, while she had a husband or a child stretched on the bed of sickness.

It is said, that men are peculiarly affected by the kindness and attention shown to them in time of sickness ; and I think, that women are scarcely less so. When by illness we become dependent on the services of our relations and friends, it is consolatory to find them willingly and cheerfully bestowed upon us ; and our warmest feelings of gratitude and affection are naturally excited towards those who thus seek to comfort us and alleviate our troubles. In a wife these attentions and the devoting of self to an invalid husband, are better proofs of her affection for him,

than any uncalled-for expressions of tenderness bestowed upon him at another time. If he has had reason previously to doubt her affection, or if, from singularity of temper on either part, unhappy differences have subsisted between them, at such a period these impressions may be obliterated from the memory of both, by those pleasing feelings to which renewed confidence in each other's affection has given birth. This favourable change, which may afterwards have an important effect upon their domestic happiness, must be the result of patient forbearance and good humour on the part of the wife, while smarting from the whims and fretfulness of her invalid ; and even by enduring meekly the undeserved reproaches, which, in the bitterness of pain, are sometimes bestowed on the gentlest and most soothing of nurses.

A spirit of forbearance constitutes a prominent feature in the character of a good nurse ; but to that she must add complete command over her countenance, which should be composed and cheerful even in the moment of the greatest anxiety : also a gentle and kind manner, combined with so firm a temper as not to yield to the caprice of the invalid on any point prejudicial to his recovery ; and prudence to withhold any communication that may agitate him, whether in a pleasurable or painful manner, should complete the character.

MRS. L.—Should not bad news, such as the death of friends or relations, intelligence of a distressing kind respecting either his affairs, or those of his nearest connexions, be withheld, if possible, from a sick person, until his returning strength will enable him to bear the communication with composure ?

MRS. B.—Yes ; and even good news should not always be imparted, and never, except in the most cautious manner. In an illness attended with any nervous irritation, bad intelligence might cause a serious depression of spirits in the patient ; and good news, as alarming an excitation.

The best effects, however, are sometimes produced by good news ; and patients who have been almost despaired of, have suddenly, as it were, shaken off disease, and rapidly recovered after some pleasant intelligence has been communicated to them. It, nevertheless, requires judgment to determine the propriety of the communication ; and the physician should always be consulted.

Nor is it only during illness that the arts of good nursing are to be displayed. As soon as the disease disappears, and nothing remains to be done but to avoid any thing liable to occasion a relapse, and to strengthen the system, care must be taken to provide nourishment suitable to the state of the patient. It should be in readiness at the very moment he asks for it, or at the times which, probably, the professional attendant has stated as proper for nourishment to be given. In cases of extreme weakness, the least delay in giving the food often causes faintness, and, sometimes, the total loss of appetite in the invalid ; and this cannot occur without retarding his progress towards recovery. Nature, at such a time, demands imperatively, and must be obeyed. The quantity of nourishment and its nature are generally determined by the medical gentleman in attendance ; but, in the first stages of convalescence, they usually consist of a light and farinaceous matter, such as arrow-root, sago ; or such as chicken-broth, and beef-tea. After these have had their day, nourishment of a more solid kind may be given ; but it should be administered cautiously, and, at first, in small quantities. The craving appetite of convalescency is never to be gratified to its utmost. The powers of the stomach, when weakened by disease, will not digest any great portion of food at one time, and if the patient have not strength of mind enough to resist, the firmness of the *good nurse* must interpose itself, and, by a steady denial of more than the proper quantity of food, avert the injury which the patient would bring upon himself. During the various stages of recovery,

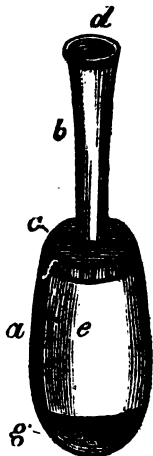
the attentive nurse will not confine her powers merely to supply the invalid with aliment, but she will also strive to render the time less irksome and tedious to him, who is, perhaps, already weary of the sick room, and impatient for emancipation from it. She will read to him amusing and light works, of a nature not to call forth any strong emotion on his part, but sufficiently interesting to tempt him to withdraw his attention from himself, and to fix it upon a subject of a less anxious nature than his own health. Anxiety, whatever be the cause of it, is very unfavourable to convalescence. At other times, when he is not in the humour to attend to reading, she will strive to converse with him on agreeable and lively topics, also foreign to his state of health, or if she revert to that, it will be with the view of encouraging him to look forward to the enjoyment of renewed health; and, if that be improbable, she will discover other sources of comfort with which to cheer and solace him.

Mrs. L.—You make the character of the good nurse rather an arduous one; and to attain it, must require the abandonment of every selfish feeling. I am afraid there are many who would find it no easy task to personate the character of the good nurse, for any length of time. Will you, now, oblige me with some particulars relative to the management of children when they are ill?

Mrs. B.—The chief difficulties in nursing sick children, are the impossibility of particularly ascertaining the symptoms of their indisposition, and, also, the trouble of administering medicine to them. In infancy the former difficulty is unavoidable; but I believe that the latter is frequently owing to early mismanagement. I have known children upon whom hours of entreaty were wasted in persuading them to take a dose of medicine, and even then without success, until some bribe had been added; while other children, merely to obtain their mother's approbation, and with no other reward than this, except

perhaps the additional privilege of breakfasting with her on the morning on which the physic was to be taken, have swallowed it down as soon as it was presented to them. It is the early subjection of a child's will to that of his parents which renders his management easy, either in sickness or in health.

There have been instances of children falling a sacrifice to their own wilfulness, in refusing to take medicines when it has been absolutely necessary. To prevent this, a spoon has been invented, by which medicines in a fluid form can easily be administered to any child. The bowl of this spoon, *a*, will contain as much as a desert spoon, but is made rather longer and not so wide; it has a short hollow handle, *b*, which has an opening both into the bowl of the spoon, at *c*, and at *d*, the opposite extremity. A lid *e*, which opens with a hinge *f*, covers the spoon, except near the lip *g*, where a space is left to allow the contents



of the spoon to be poured out. In using it, the lid is raised to admit the dose of medicine to be poured into it, after which it is closely shut down: and the effect is such, that when a finger is pressed upon the open extremity of the handle, scarcely any of the liquid escapes, in whatever position the spoon is held. After the spoon is filled, it should be held firmly in the right hand, the middle finger of which must press upon, and close the orifice at the end of the handle. The child should then be laid, backward, on the knee, his head reclining on the left arm; and, as soon as the spoon is fairly in the mouth, let it be pressed down upon the tongue, when, by removing the finger from

the opening of the handle, the whole dose will be suddenly projected into the stomach of the child.*

Mrs. L.—I have frequently observed, that when a child is ill, the servants crowd into the room, under the pretence of nursing the invalid, although I suspect they meet there for their own amusement, and to gossip. This surely is improper; and the noise and bustle which they may cause, do much harm to the invalid. Are not these sufficient reasons for prohibiting the custom?

Mrs. B.—Certainly. And, besides the evils which you have noticed, they frequently take with them cakes and sweetmeats, and tempt the sick child to eat them, at a time when abstinence is perhaps the chief medicine he requires; a remedy which servants are very apt to consider as the greatest punishment that can be inflicted on any one. From a mistaken kindness, they think it necessary to induce the invalid to eat, even when the orders of his doctor forbid it; and when his own disinclination for food indicates the necessity of abstinence.

Mrs. L.—I have heard sensible people say, that during the illness of a child, it is desirable not to indulge it more than usual, if possible. This is a hard task for a mother, whose increased anxiety and desire to promote the comfort of a sick child, often gain the ascendancy over her judgment.

Mrs. B.—The weakness of a parent at such a time may be excused, although it would spare her a harassing struggle for supremacy, upon the recovery of her child, if she could, while watching over the symptoms, and administering every proper remedy, hide some part of her tenderness and solicitude from the object of her care. Too much indulgence during illness sometimes induces also a disposition to disingenuousness in children, which leads them to

* This spoon, which was invented by Dr. A. T. Thomson, of Hinde-Street, may be had from Mr. Gibson, silversmith, 71 Bishopgate-Street-within.

feign or to exaggerate the account of their symptoms. *Unobserved* watchfulness on the part of the mother is peculiarly necessary also, when the child becomes convalescent, because it is with children as with adults, the more the attention is withdrawn from personal feelings, the more favourably will the recovery proceed.

The complaints of children are generally much connected with the state of their bowels. On the first appearance of any symptoms of illness, these should be freely opened ; and if no amendment afterwards takes place, medical advice should be instantly obtained. The inspection of the evacuations will enable some opinion to be formed of the nature of the disease, if seated in the bowels. This inspection should not be intrusted to servants, who, either from ignorance or carelessness, may, by not giving a proper account of it, mislead the opinion respecting the nature of the complaint.

The recovery of children from acute diseases requires much care and watchfulness. When they are taken out of doors, during the first two or three weeks of convalescence, their mother should accompany them, to prevent over-fatigue in walking, or in any exercise, from which fatal consequences have been sometimes known to result. It is also desirable, after acute diseases, that the meals should be superintended by some one capable of preventing errors, both in respect to the quantity and the quality of the food. The state of the bowels must also be attended to, as any continued irregularity in them would be liable to renew the disease, or to render recovery lingering. Suitable amusements should be provided, in order to dispel any approach to low spirits, and to fretfulness.

MRS. L.—How should servants be managed when ill ?

MRS. B.—Servants, when ill, require the same kind of management as children. They are often very wayward, and unwilling to take the medicines prescribed for them. On this account, these should be given to them either by

their mistress, or by a superior servant who can be depended upon, and who will not, from false kindness, permit them to practise any deception in this respect. Their aid, also, is requisite to look after other servants when they are ill; for, if left to themselves, they will seldom, on the approach of recovery, show either prudence or forbearance in the choice and quantity of their food. A sick servant should be seen at least once in the day by her mistress; and, if possible, also, when the medical visit is paid. It is a part of the domestic duty of a lady, to ascertain the exact state of any invalid among her household. When there is a want either of comforts or of cleanliness in the sick room, or any inattention towards the invalid from her fellow-servants, the censure belongs undoubtedly to the head of the family, whose general superintendence would have secured the sick person from neglect, and whose example would have shamed into kindness all the unfeeling or careless members of her family.

It is a provoking characteristic of servants, that they allow themselves to be completely overtaken by illness, before they will mention it, or give way to it in the least. By neglecting to take early notice of disease, and refusing alleviation from medicine and other means, it gains power; and, thus, the patient's sufferings and the general inconvenience of the family are augmented, merely, I believe, from the dread of being *doctored*.

If the illness of a servant be of short duration, the work may probably be managed among the other servants; but if it be protracted, it will be found advisable to fill up the place with a temporary assistant, lest the other servants become discontented or over-worked.

Want of gratitude in servants, who have experienced the greatest kindness during illness, is the complaint of many; and there are instances to justify the assertion, although I believe there are as many proofs of grateful attachment to weigh in the opposite balance. Yet, if we do meet

with ingratitude, our cares and desire to do good should not be diminished, since in no instance can the failings of others justify any omissions in kindness or duty on our part.

Mrs. L.—Do you not think that the expenses attendant on the illness of a domestic should be defrayed by her employer? Perhaps there is no injustice in refusing to do so; but it appears to me to be an unfeeling act, to suffer the small earnings of a servant's labour to be sunk in the heavy expenses of an illness, incurred, perhaps, by over-exertion, or by the discharge of some of the duties of her place. Are you of this opinion?

Mrs. B.—Undoubtedly: I think there are very few cases in which the medical debt of a servant, falling ill while discharging her duty to her employers, should not be defrayed by them; and by them, also, should the expense be met of her removal into the country, provided change of air is deemed necessary for the re-establishment of health. On recovering from acute diseases, this change is generally very desirable; but unless the friends of the servant, to whom it is natural she should wish to be removed, live in good air, and are able to provide her with suitable nourishment, her strength may perhaps return to her more rapidly, by remaining in her place, in possession of the comforts necessary for the entire restoration of her strength.

Mrs. L.—How inconvenient must be the illness of the mistress of a family! especially if of any length. What embarrassment it may occasion! Without the hand which regulates and keeps the whole in action, I am afraid the best arranged family would soon betray symptoms of confusion.

Mrs. B.—The better a family has been regulated, the longer will it continue unchanged, by any circumstances that may occur. But if some inconveniences attend the illness of the heads of families, some advantages may be

derived from them. Under such circumstances you would have an opportunity to illustrate, by your example, the beauty of patience, fortitude, and resignation. At the same time, the exercise of these qualities would not forbid that rational solicitude for life, which induces a strict adherence to the advice and measures prescribed for your relief; indeed, as a wife or a mother, you would be unjustifiable, were you to neglect the proper means by which you might be restored to health and usefulness. It would be deserting your duties, and valuing too cheaply the gift of life, not to avail yourself of those specifics for disease which God has created, and of which human knowledge has discovered the application. If God see fit, in your case, to bless the means employed for the restoration of your health, testify your gratitude to Him, and if otherwise, teach your children and dependants to bow submissively to His will.

Our own illness should also excite in us thankful and affectionate feelings towards those who devote themselves to us, during our continuance in this state of dependence and bodily infirmity. And these feelings should be evinced by giving them neither unnecessary trouble nor pain by uttering as few complaints as possible; by not indulging irritable and pettish feelings; and by receiving, even from the humblest of our attendants, every attention with thankfulness. A long illness, unfortunately, has not always these effects; but tends, rather, to render us selfish and regardless of those, who, in their attendance upon us, undergo many privations of rest and comfort, great fatigue of body, and much anxiety of mind.

As soon as we become convalescent, we should show that it is our desire not to continue, longer than necessary, helpless and burdensome; and as each day brings back some portion of our strength, it should also witness some few efforts, on our part, of returning usefulness, although this should be done cautiously, and without the risk of

incurring fatigue beyond our powers. We may, very properly, be desirous not to set a bad example to others of over-indulgence ; but still we must be prudent, and not throw ourselves back into disease, by any exertion to which our strength is unequal. As the mind is weakened, as well as the body, by illness, we should be upon our guard to resist improper interference, however well meant. Thus nurses are apt to place their wisdom in competition with that of the medical gentleman who attends ; and to endeavour, when he is absent, to undermine the confidence of the patient in him. Sometimes they are urgent that a favourite *nostrum* should be tried, of the success of which they appear to be so certain, that an invalid much enfeebled by illness has scarcely resolution to resist their solicitations. Yet, if you value your life, do not put it thus in the charge of ignorance, when knowledge and talent are within your reach.

Mrs. L.—I hope I shall never be so weakened by illness as to lose sight of the boundary beyond which no nurse should pass : but I wish to ask you if it would not be desirable for the mother or mistress of a family to have a general knowledge of the nature and treatment of those diseases which may some time or other occur in her house ? I do not mean that her knowledge should be of that kind, or of sufficient extent, to render her presumptuous, and to prompt her to depend too much on her own judgment, or induce her to attempt, herself, the cure of such complaints. This I know you would properly condemn, considering it as an error liable to entail fatal consequences. The knowledge which it appears to me well to possess, may be termed extra-professional ; and should include the treatment of any disease on those points which do not come within the pale of medical jurisdiction.

Mrs. B.—What you have just said, reminds me, that in my desk I have a paper drawn up by a professional gentleman, and which will, I think, furnish you with the infor-

mation you require ; at least as far as regards the nursing and attention which diseases require from the unprofessional attendant. Omitting a prefatory remark, addressed to me individually, I will read it to you.

“ It is of considerable importance to acquire the knowledge of the class to which any disease belongs ; as it allays unnecessary fears, inspires confidence in the attendants of the sick room, and points out the means by which contagious and infectious ailments may be prevented from extending.

All diseases may be regarded, by the *unprofessional* observer, as belonging to one or other of the three following classes :—1. *Contagious* diseases. 2. *Infectious* diseases. 3. *Non-contagious* diseases.

Your medical man will tell you the name of any complaint which may occur in your house ; and by referring to the following list you will find to which of the three classes it belongs.

1. **CONTAGIOUS DISEASES** are those which are communicated from one individual to another, by *touch* or immediate *contact*. They may be also conveyed by the clothes, or bedding of the patient. They are happily few in number ; and the following are the chief diseases of this description :—

a. Mumps, which are characterized by painful swellings of the glands at the angles of the jaws, and attended by an intermittent fever, require that the patient be kept in a moderate temperature ; and that warmth be maintained in the swellings by flannels. In this disease, sudden exposure to cold is apt to repel the swelling in the glands of the face and neck, and to cause the formation of sympathetic swellings in other parts of the body. The diet should be of a vegetable and farinaceous kind.

b. Purulent Ophthalmia. In this affection, the discharge from the eyes is capable of communicating the disease, if applied to the eyes of a healthy person. The towels,

therefore, of the patient should not be used by other persons; and the nurse or any other attendant, immediately after having syringed or washed the eyes of the patient, should wash her hands. Also in syringing the patient's eyes, care should be taken that none of the discharge spurts into the eyes of the attendant. A child afflicted with purulent ophthalmia should be kept apart from other children; and should not even sleep with the mother or the nurse.

c. Erysipelas is distinguished by diffused swelling, accompanied with a red blush or suffusion on the face, arms or legs, which feel burning hot, and is attended with symptoms of fever. The apartment of the patient should be cool and well ventilated; and the changes of linen should be frequent. When vesication takes place, the nurse should cover any scratch in her hand with oil or lard, when touching the discharge; and, immediately after she has been handling the parts, should wash her hands with soap and warm water. All the directions of the medical attendant regarding local applications should be strictly obeyed. The diet should be of a vegetable and farinaceous kind.

d. Ringworm of the Scalp. This disease appears in distinct patches, of a nearly circular form, of small yellow pustules upon the hairy scalp, the forehead, and the neck. Sometimes the hair falls off at these patches, and the circles remain red, scurfy, and dry. Children who are affected with this disease of the head should be separated from other children; and great attention is requisite to apply regularly the ointments which are necessary for stimulating the scalp, and exciting a more healthy action in the diseased vessels of the affected parts. It is a disease which often resists every remedy; but as it may be safely treated by local applications, I may venture to mention a generally successful mode of managing it, when the patches become dry and inert. In this state, let the head

be shaved, then wash it well with warm water and soap; and apply to the affected spots a solution of nitrate of silver, in the proportion of six grains to an ounce of *distilled* water, until it occasion a slight soreness of the surface, which may afterwards be healed by the common tar ointment. When this fails, the cuticle may be destroyed by pencilling it with strong acetic acid; and afterwards healing the sore thus produced with tar ointment. Another method is to apply a depilatory ointment, composed of equal parts of weak quicklime, alum, oxyd of iron, and carbonate of potash, mixed up with a sufficient quantity of lard. During this application, which must be confined to the affected parts, the hairs and scurf must be removed by washing with soap and water.

In the non-contagious scald-head, danger has sometimes followed a sudden retrocession of the eruption; and, therefore, the application of local remedies should never be tried without medical advice.

e. Itch. It is scarcely requisite to caution a mistress to separate from the rest of the family the individual who may, unfortunately, have caught this disease. It is never a primary disease, except in the lowest and most uncleanly of the poor; but is generally communicated by close intercourse with an affected person. It is not difficult to cure; and unless under some very peculiar circumstances, no risk attends the use of local applications for that purpose. The best ointment is composed of equal parts (say an ounce) of sulphur, of bay-berries finely powered, and of white vitriol (sulphate of zinc), and ten drops of essence of bergamot; the whole of which must be mixed up into an ointment, with olive oil. The half of the body should be anointed with this every night; and at the same time, and each morning, a tea-spoonful of sulphur should be taken internally.

2. INFECTIOUS DISEASES are those which can be communicated from one individual to another, through the me-

drum of the air. The following are generally regarded as of this description :

a. Hooping-cough, the symptoms of which have been already noticed, requires that the patient be kept in a room well ventilated, but free from currents of air, and of a summer temperature ; while a strict adherence to a milk and vegetable diet has been found beneficial.

b. Dysentery is characterized by the purging of mucous or gelatinous matter mixed with blood ; a constant inclination to stool, and continued fever : it requires free ventilation, cool apartments, frequent changes of linen, and the instant removal of all evacuations.

c. Scarlet Fever, which has been already described, requires a cool apartment, very free ventilation, and frequent changes of linen. The attendant should always stand to windward of the patient. As scarlet fever occurs only once in life ; in choosing a sick nurse, the fact of her having had the disease should be ascertained. She should, also, have good sight, and a steady hand, as in bad cases of ulceration of the throat, the ulcers are required to be syringed and touched with various local applications by the nurse.

d. Measles have also been described. They require a warm, or at least, a temperate apartment, free from currents of air. All sudden alternations of heat and cold are dangerous. Clean linen should be very carefully aired. Stimulants, such as saffron and camphor, which are sometimes advised to be given by ignorant nurses, with the view of throwing out the eruption, are highly dangerous. The diet should be farinaceous, the beverage, toast and water, rennet whey, barley water, and thin gruel.

e. Small-pox. In this loathsome disease, the apartments should be capacious, cool, and well ventilated. The windows should be open day and night, and the linen daily changed ; indeed, during the maturation of the pustules, it should be changed twice in the course of the day. The

patient should be often taken out of bed and carried into the open air. Other children in a family should be prohibited from entering the sick room, even if they have been vaccinated; but they need not leave the house, as the infectious exhalation from the body of the patient is soon diluted, and rendered inert in the atmosphere. After the disease is over, the room should be carefully fumigated, and the bed and bedding scoured. The diet should be of farinaceous substances; milk, ripe acidulous fruits; and the drink should consist of toast and water, lemonades, and whey.

f. Chicken-pox differs from small pox not only in the intensity of the fever, but in the character of the eruption, which is vesicular, instead of being pustular. The vesicles seem as if formed by sprinkling boiling water from a loose brush over the body. It requires the same nursing as small-pox; but less attention, as it is a milder disease.

g. Typhus Fever. In this formidable disease it is necessary to impress on the minds of nurses, and the other attendants in the sick-room, that the effluvia by which this disease is communicated, is more concentrated, and, consequently, more virulent, in a stagnant than in a free air; hence the advantage of free ventilation, both for the sake of the patient, and of the nurse and the attendants. If the apartment be large, airy, and clean, and the attendants keep to the windward of the patient, there is little danger of the infection of typhus proving injurious.

The diet should be chiefly farinaceous, with milk and light broths. The quantity of wine ordered by the medical attendants should be strictly administered, but not exceeded.

The sheets and body-linen ought to be changed twice in the twenty-four hours; and instantly removed from the room, as well as all the evacuations. Some people imagine there is less danger of infection from the linen which is brought from the invalid, if it be immersed in cold water as

soon as it is removed from the room ; and they recommend that tubs of cold water should stand by the chamber-door in readiness for the linen, and as soon as it is plunged in, that it should be carried to the laundress, who, as well as the other individuals who are obliged to handle the linen, will not be so liable to suffer from it, as if it had not undergone this immersion. It is useful to mix the water into which the linen is thrown with some of the chloride of lime ;* and, if some of this fluid be put into the bed-pan or night-chair, the air of the chamber will be kept free from fetid odours.

h. Consumption. In this melancholy disease, the patient should sleep alone. The apartment should be large and well ventilated : but the temperature should be mild and as equable as possible : it should not exceed 60° or 65° Fahr. The diet should be light, consisting chiefly of milk, vegetables, raisins, and farinaceous substances. The food should be taken in small quantities, and at long intervals. The invalid should take moderate exercise, either in a carriage or on horseback ; sailing and swinging are also desirable in fine mild weather.

When contagious, or infectious diseases, unfortunately, break out in a family, it is necessary to instil into the minds of your nurses and servants, both by precept and by personal example, the necessity of maintaining a fearless mind in their intercourse with the sick ; for nothing renders the habit so susceptible of the poison of contagion or of infection, as fear, and any of the depressing passions. The diet of those who attend in the sick-room, should be more generous than usual ; and they should be instructed never to lean over the patient, and always to stand on that side of the bed from which the current of air, which is admitted into the room, is flowing. A fire in a sick-room, if it be

* Or common ley. Strong ley, or pyroligneous acid, may also be advantageously put into the night-chair.—*Amer. Ed*

a spacious apartment, is useful in winter, for promoting ventilation ; but, with the exception of measles and whooping-cough, contagious and infectious diseases require cool air. Cleanliness in every respect, both as regards the ablution of the body of the patient, and frequent changes of linen, and the immediate removal from the room of every thing likely to create a smell, are essential in every sick room ; but more particularly when the diseases are either contagious or infectious. By such management, and with due precaution, diseases of these classes rarely extend.

3. NON-CONTAGIOUS DISEASES comprehend all those which are incidental to the body, and which have not been enumerated under the heads *contagious* and *infectious*. Although they are too numerous to be particularly noticed, yet a few hints regarding the nursing, and the extra-professional attention which they require, may be given under the heads of *inflammatory diseases*, and *diseases of debility*.

a. Inflammatory diseases. Except when the chest is the seat of disease, these diseases require a low or cold temperature, and free ventilation ; and even when the lungs are affected, the temperature should not be high, but in ventilating the apartments, currents of air should be carefully avoided. Directions regarding diet are generally given by the medical attendant ; but when this is not the case, it may be laid down as a general rule, to avoid giving animal food, wine, spirits, porter, or any stimulant, in this class of complaints. The best diet consists of fruit, arrow-root, and similar farinaceous substances ; the drink should be toast and water, weak tea, rennet whey, and lemonade.

The medical treatment of inflammatory complaints is generally more active than in nervous affections ; and as they run their course very rapidly, very much depends on strict attention to the directions of the physician or medical practitioner, both as regards regimen and medicine. It is not to be imagined that a medicine may be given at

any time, in diseases of this kind ; for in none does the practitioner more decidedly calculate upon its effects, and unless it be given at the prescribed periods, he cannot be answerable for the result. The intention of giving drugs in divided doses, is to renew or maintain some specific effect, which they are intended to produce in the habit ; and unless this be done, no progress can be made towards a cure. The practice of giving remedies, at distant and irregular intervals, may be said to resemble what is termed *marking time* in the evolutions of the soldier, who appears in this manœuvre to be marching, but never advances from the spot on which he originally stood. This admonition regarding the administering medicines as ordered, is, especially, directed to those mothers, whose ill-judged tenderness and indulgence make them yield to the entreaties of their invalid children, to be spared an occasional dose of medicine.

When it is desirable to promote perspiration, the common error of supposing that this is to be produced by external heat, or by drinking hot liquids, should be avoided : on the contrary, a copious draught of cold water and light bed coverings, often aid perspiration, independent of the medicines which are given to produce that effect, by diminishing the heat and excitement of fever.

In convalescence from acute diseases, relations and nurses are generally too anxious to recruit the strength, and in their over-haste to get the patient well, often do much harm, and bring on a renewal of the disease. A relapse, in proportion as the habit is debilitated, is more hazardous than the first attack of a disease, and the recovery more protracted, if it ultimately take place. Both food and exercise should be restricted for some time after an acute disease is cured ; and the patient should be guided towards health, like an infant in his first efforts to walk. He should proceed timidly and very gradually, in renewing all his former habits and employments. Recovery is often

impeded by too great an anxiety to return to the pursuits either of business or pleasure, which had engaged the patient's attention previous to his illness. In young patients it is absolutely necessary to restrain the appetite, which, during convalescence, frequently becomes voracious, and all the bad effects of over-indulgence would follow, if it were not for the control of the parent.

When it is necessary to bleed a patient in an inflammatory disease, it is absurd and annoying to the surgeon to prepare, as is usual, the scent-bottle, and other means to prevent fainting; for his object, in general, is to produce that very effect, which these volatile bodies are intended to counteract. No interference of this kind, on the part of the nurses, should be permitted; and if a patient faint, he should be left with entire confidence to the care of the surgeon. The cups containing the blood, without being agitated, should be set aside in a cool place. The appearance of the vital fluid when taken by the lancet from the arm, or any other part, in a continued stream, after standing some time, often determines the necessity of repeating the operation.

When danger is apprehended, and indeed in the sick room at all times, the countenances of relations and attendants should not betray the anxiety which they feel. Those who cannot command their feelings are unfit to enter the apartment of an invalid. A cheerful countenance, a cool collected manner, lively conversation when talking is advisable, and gentleness in performing any little office about the patient, with a steady manner to carry through the object required, are qualifications of great importance in the attendants of patients suffering from acute diseases. Pain is often forgotten when the attention is diverted from the seat of it, and nature is then left to pursue her remedial efforts undisturbed, and with a greater certainty of success.

2. *Diseases of Debility*.—Under this term may be comprehended all those diseases, which are chiefly attended

by a disordered state of the digestive organs, and of the nervous system ; and these, consequently, have more or less a considerable influence on the mind. They require, therefore, both physical and moral management.

The physical management consists in attention to *diet*, *clothing*, and *exercise*. In weakened digestions, every article of diet which is likely to prove acrescent should be avoided ; such as every thing termed a *made dish*, pastry, sweet things of every description, and raw vegetable matter. Animal food, if of a mild quality, is more digestible than vegetable, and solids are more digestible than fluids. Flatulent food is particularly injurious, as it not only oppresses the stomach by the distension it causes, but occasions hypochondriasis and depressed spirits. If no organic affection be present, spiced food and other stimulant articles of diet may be permitted, but in this the directions of the medical man should be solicited. Although salt be an assistant to digestion, yet salted meat, such as ham, bacon, hung beef, and similar articles, are very indigestible. Animal food is easier of digestion, and more nutritious than fish, but it is also more heating. A weak person should eat, at least, four times in the day, and the first and second meal, or breakfast and dinner, should be the most substantial of the meals. In debilitated habits, an early dinner is preferable to a late one, and, in this case, a supper is requisite ; and although a little animal food may sometimes be admissible, yet as a general rule meat suppers are injurious.

With regard to *clothing* ; in diseases of debility, and particularly those connected with the stomach and digestive organs, it is of great importance to maintain the due action of the skin. The clothing therefore should be suited for this purpose, warm but not heavy ; the extremities in particular should be kept of an equable and natural temperature.

Much depends on *exercise*; especially for children labouring under diseases of debility. The long-continued efforts of a judicious and skilful medical attendant may be completely overthrown, although on the point of being successful, by a child being overwalked. Weak and delicate children should be allowed and encouraged to run about in situations, where each effort can be followed by a temporary rest, that is, where they can either run, walk, or sit down, as inclination prompts them, but they should never be compelled to *take a walk*. Either horse exercise, sailing, or riding, in debilitated habits, is to be preferred to walking; and all exercise should be taken by invalids in the morning and early part of the day; for they generally experience in the evening a low kind of fever from the efforts of the day.

With respect to the moral management; it should always be remembered, that in every case of debility the nervous system is very susceptible to impressions; and, therefore, the conduct of parents and attendants towards children should be accordingly regulated. If too much tenderness and sympathy be shown to them, the already morbid susceptibility is increased, and the patient is rendered too much alive to personal feelings and comforts; and many circumstances, which would be otherwise overlooked, become sources of irritation and annoyance.

In nervous affections, sympathy is very injurious to the patient, whose attention cannot be too much weaned from his own feelings. Medical men, who have studied the human mind as well as the body, have judged it expedient, and have found it not difficult, to lead a hypochondriac to believe that he is afflicted with some disease, the symptoms of which the doctor chooses to enumerate, and considers as connected with that disease. He should enjoin the relatives or the friends of an hypochondriac to display a certain degree of indifference to his complaints, and always to endeavour to keep up in his mind the belief that

he is capable of sharing, both in the business and amusements of the family.

Frequent change of society, which imposes on the patient some little restraint of his feelings, and compels him to a degree of mental exertion on subjects unconnected with himself, has been in some cases found to be beneficial; but, unfortunately, this remedy is the one most repugnant to the feelings of the hypochondriac, who would, if he could, shut himself up from the observation of every one, and give free indulgence to his melancholy thoughts. And rarely is it that those around him have courage and steadiness enough to enforce a plan of this kind, the bare mention of which occasions a distressing degree of irritation.

With young people it is less difficult than with their seniors to effect a change in the circumstances of their situation, and to remove them from under the influence of their friends, whose mode of treatment has, from the peculiar tendencies of the invalids, been unfavourable to them. In the case of a young lady whose mother was too indulgent, this plan met with complete success. She was so much the object of her mother's attentive and anxious cares, that every little feeling which she experienced, became a matter of consequence, and of medical treatment; and at length she did little else than recline the whole day on a sofa, complaining of a thousand ailments which existed only in her imagination. She never rose to breakfast, but considered herself to be in such a debilitated state, that every little exertion was a matter of impossibility. With all this she was fond of gayety and high society, and would occasionally rouse herself after a day of apathy to dress for a ball, at which she would dance until morning. A sensible friend, who found that she could, when excited, *dance five miles*, although she could not *walk one*, contrived to separate her for some time from her mother, and by proper management stimulated her to such active

habits as her age required, for the maintenance of her health ; and, thus, she was rescued from a life of wretchedness, which, under her mother's management, might have ended in a mad-house.

It is, however, equally injurious to treat with harshness, or to ridicule the complaints of the hypochondriac ; and as the physician is often obliged to humour the patient, and to prescribe what is termed a *placebo*, so relations and others should, when the patient appears from increased irritation to require soothing, listen to a string of complaints, which they know to be in a great measure exaggerated, rather than by totally disregarding and ridiculing them, add to the irritation of mind of the individual, who, notwithstanding his fancies, is actually in a state of disease.

I have already said, that every thing leading to morbid sensibility should be avoided, particularly in young females, who are by nature timid and sensitive ; and some of the accomplishments of modern times, particularly music, have this tendency. They increase the nervous susceptibility to a degree which is truly alarming. A lady, who was educated with too much tenderness, whose feelings were carefully guarded from every shock and affliction which could be averted, and whose imagination had been cultivated in the school of romance and sentiment, having married, suffered fifteen successive miscarriages, and never would have become a mother, had she not been deprived of her harp, and every work of imagination, and confined to her bed for seven months. I have seen this lady so overcome with her own music, as to shed tears. Morbid nervous susceptibility is also productive of another evil ; it renders a person liable to fall into some diseases, such as epilepsy, hysteria, and mania, merely from seeing others in the paroxysms who are afflicted with them. And in a case of this kind, such complaints can only be cured by moral management. The celebrated Boerhaave was consulted respecting an epileptic attack, which at a certain

hour daily, fell upon the whole of a school of young girls. On inquiring the history of the case, he found the complaint had originated in sympathy with one of the girls who had epilepsy. Having ascertained this fact, he judiciously concluded that the disease could be cured only by a counteraction in the nervous system, and conceived this expedient as the best remedy :—He ordered the school-mistress to have the kitchen poker made red-hot, at the time that the girls were usually attacked ; and having called at that time, he seized the poker, and marching with a solemn gait and air into the school, told the children that he meant to thrust the red-hot poker down the throat of the first who was seized with the fit. The consequence was, that the effort of mind, which in checking the approach of the fit, each little one was compelled to make, succeeded ; and, the habit being broken, the complaint never appeared again in the school."

Thus ends this little manuscript, which contains much useful information

Mrs. L.—I am obliged to you for communicating it to me ; it has given me a greater insight on the subjects of which it treats, than I ever expected to obtain.

The choice of a medical attendant is the subject on which I now wish to know your opinion.

Mrs. B.—Nothing is of greater importance than this choice ; and yet there are few events in life which are more regulated by accident. Locality, a fashionable reputation, or the recommendation of a gossiping acquaintance, may bring an individual into your house, to whose skill your life is to be intrusted, and upon whose integrity your character is to be reposed ; upon such slight grounds do we not unfrequently place our confidence, and then are astonished if we find it has been given to an unworthy object. In many situations, it is true, no selection can be made ; in country places, for instance, where one medical man has, perhaps, a whole district under his charge : but

if it should be in your power to select your medical practitioner, the following observations may be useful to you:—

The first object is to ascertain that the person you are about to employ has been regularly educated; that he is a man of strong intellect, discrimination, and good sense. Without these qualities, a good education will avail him little; it cannot give him either acuteness or judgment, by which he alone could be enabled to observe the nice distinctions which characterize diseases, and to display individual skill, when circumstances occur to require a difference in management from that which is usual. He should be firm in his determinations, but not obstinately so; with sufficient liberality and candour, he should be willing to listen to any suggestion or recommendation, even if it proceed from an unprofessional person. His manner should be cool and collected; nor should any unforeseen turn in the progress of a disease, ever deprive him of his self-possession. His whole deportment should entitle him to respect and confidence, which would give weight to his persuasive powers, when called into action by an untractable patient. He should be cheerful and mild, gentlemanly in his habits, and possess a large store of patience to enable him to listen, even with the appearance of interest, to all the details of an invalid's complaint.

Mrs. L.—In drawing this *beau idéal* of a medical man, I do not think conversational powers should be omitted. I have had an opportunity of observing more than once, that the visit of a professional man has appeared to have done more good than the medicines he prescribed; and this could only be attributable to the art he had employed in luring his patient from the depressing subject of his disease, and engaging his attention upon lively and agreeable topics.

Mrs. B.—Your observation is a just one, and reminds me that I have heard a medical friend of mine declare, that if he were, in a great many cases, to feel the pulse of

his patients immediately upon entering their rooms, and before he had conversed with them on indifferent subjects, he should be ready to pronounce them in a high fever, while, in fact, they are only in a state of nervous agitation, which subsides before he has been many minutes in the room.

The manners of a medical man should also be such as will ingratiate him with children ; for, as much of his practice is among the young, he will obtain more ready obedience to his commands from his little patients, if they regard him rather as a friend than as a doctor.

After professional ability, the next point to be ascertained is respecting the moral character, and the nice sense of honour maintained by the person to whom you are about to give access to your abode at all times. From his deficiency in these important qualities, may result serious inconveniences.

The worst traits in the professional character, are the habit of gossiping and being addicted to scandal. Possessing these failings, he carries with him from one house to another an influence not less malignant nor less fatal to happiness than the worst of pestilential diseases. He sows the seeds of dissession, distrust, and ill-will among relations, friends, and neighbours. Your medical attendant may become an intimate friend, and you may have occasion to lay open to him some of your domestic circumstances, as well as those which regard your health ; and if he be deserving of the confidence reposed in him, he will never betray it in an idle or careless manner. Many people err in opening too freely their private affairs to medical men : yet this very weakness, in the hands of a good and sensible man, instead of being abused, may be productive of benefit to the parties. I once knew a professional gentleman act a very judicious part towards a married couple, who, but for his interference would have separated. Had they been left to themselves, the separation would

certainly have taken place, they would have been wretched for life, and the ruin of their children would have been the consequence.

When you have found a professional attendant, whose talents and worth entitle him to your confidence, grant it to him freely in all the cases of sickness, about which you may have to consult him. If you are not able to give him your confidence, you should immediately change him. But do not indulge in the folly of believing, that the well-doing of a patient is ensured by a multiplicity of opinions on his case; the reverse is more usually true, although a consultation may be occasionally necessary. Yet in these consultations the younger doctors generally yield as a matter of etiquette and politeness to the elder, or to those of more reputation; and the life of a patient has sometimes been sacrificed, which might have been saved by pursuing a plan judiciously formed, upon a long previous acquaintance with the constitution, habits, and feelings of the sufferer.

Mrs. L.—A good nurse is scarcely of less consequence in a sick-room, than a skilful practitioner; but I have heard general complaints of the difficulty of procuring one. It is very singular, that in the present state of society, when improvement has extended itself to every rank and profession, that this class of people has remained stationary in mind, manners, and prejudices. Indeed, were I to describe a sick-nurse from those I have myself known, I should say, that infirmity, ignorance, grossness of habit and manners, want of feeling, except where her own interests are concerned, want of cleanliness, and a contemptible disposition to intrigue with servants, form the chief of her characteristics.

Mrs. B.—Such I believe a nurse too frequently to be. Let us now inquire what her qualifications ought to be.

A nurse should possess both physical and moral qualities,

to render her services really useful to the sick. She should be healthy, and not beyond the middle age of life ; strong of body, to enable her to lift the patient with ease, and capable of enduring fatigue and loss of rest. She should be easily roused from her sleep, watchful and active in all her habits, but at the same time quiet and gentle. A bustling and talkative nurse is a great annoyance to an invalid. She should be trust-worthy, temperate, not a snuff-taker, cleanly in her person, and orderly in her habits ; mild in her manners, rather taciturn, and willing to be guided by those above her. She should be able to evince firmness in resisting the caprices of the patient, when they are opposed to the orders of the medical attendant. She should also be able to read and write, for without these acquirements she should never be permitted to administer medicines to the sick. I remember a melancholy instance, in proof of the danger which may result from an illiterate nurse giving medicines to a sick person. A lady, the mother of a large family, was just recovering from typhus fever ; her physician had pronounced her out of danger, and the assiduities of a near relation, who had been constantly with her, and had assisted the nurse, were now dispensed with, and she was left without apprehension to the charge of the nurse, and no doubt was entertained of her convalescence proceeding rapidly ; when, on that very day, the nurse, who could not read, gave her an opium embrocation instead of a bark draught, and before her friend and physician could be summoned to her, she was a corpse. Her family, who a moment previously had been indulging the joy her expected recovery had excited, were instantly bereft of a treasure, and plunged into the deepest grief.

I will not omit strongly urging you, while your feelings are touched by this melancholy little anecdote, never to take or to give medicine without both tasting and smelling it. The embrocation in question had a powerful smell of

volatile alkali, camphor, and opium, from which the draughts were entirely free. Oxalic acid, a virulent poison, which has been often given for Epsom salts, is powerfully acid, while Epsom salts are not at all acid, but have a bitter and nauseous taste.

Many little things are requisite in a sick-room, with which a nurse ought to be familiar; but as this is not always the case, and as it is equally important for you to be acquainted with them as well as the nurse, I will give you all the information I am able on these subjects.

MRS. L.—Indeed I shall be obliged by your instructions; for I am of opinion, that whatever the qualifications of a nurse may be, she still ought to be manageable; and *that* she is not likely to be, if she imagines herself wiser and more clever than her employer.

MRS. B.—Among various other things which I wish you to learn, is the best method of making barley water, gruel, arrow root, white-wine whey, toast water, balm, mint, linseed, and beef teas. These every nurse should know how to prepare, yet how seldom are they properly made! From the experience of many years, I may venture to recommend these directions, by which the articles in question may be well made.

1. BARLEY WATER.—Upon one ounce of pearl barley, after it has been well washed in cold water, pour half a pint of boiling water, and then boil it for a few minutes; the water must then be strained off and thrown away; afterwards a quart of boiling water must be poured over the barley, and which should then be boiled down to one pint and a quarter, and strained off. The barley water thus made is clear and mucilaginous; and when mixed with an equal quantity of good milk and a small portion of sugar, is an excellent substitute for the mother's milk, when infants are, unfortunately, to be brought up by hand. Without milk, it is one of the best beverages for all acute diseases, and may have lemon juice, raspberry vinegar,

apple tea, infusion of tamarinds, or any other acidulous substance that is agreeable to the palate of the patient, mixed with it.

2. **GRUEL.**—This farinaceous nutriment may be made either with grits or oatmeal.* When grits are used, three ounces of them, after being very well washed, should be put into two quarts of water and boiled very slowly, until the water be reduced to one half of the original quantity. During the boiling it should be stirred frequently; and, when finished, it should be strained through a hair sieve. For oatmeal gruel, three ounces of meal must be put into a basin, and bruised with the back of the spoon; small quantities of water being successively mixed with it, and each quantity poured off into another basin, before more be mixed: and this must be continued until about a quart of water has been mixed with the oatmeal. The remains of the oatmeal should then be thrown away, and the water in which it was bruised is to be boiled for twenty minutes, stirring it the whole of the time.

By either of these methods, a mild, demulcent, agreeable nutriment is prepared, which is useful in the same cases in which barley water is employed; and it may, likewise, be mixed with milk or with any acid substance. Gruel, however, is more likely to become sour than barley water, and should never be kept longer than forty-eight hours in winter and twenty-four in summer.

3. **ARROW ROOT** forms an excellent nutritive mucilage. Put two tea-spoonfuls of the powder into a half-pint basin; mix them smooth with a few tea-spoonfuls of cold water, and then let another person pour boiling water over the mixture while you continue to stir it, until it forms a kind of starchy-looking substance.†

* Or Indian meal.

† Sago and Tapioca form a similar mucilaginous substance, and are equally useful for children or as articles of diet for a sick person. As they are both hard, they require considerable boiling before they are completely dis-

Arrow root, thus prepared, may be used in the same manner as gruel. It is well adapted for the food of infants, because it is less liable to ferment than either gruel or barley water; and, for the same reason, it is the best fluid nourishment for those who are afflicted with diseases of indigestion. As it is very insipid, it requires either milk, or wine, or acids, to be mixed with it whichever may suit the taste and the state of habit of the person for whom it is intended. It forms an excellent pudding, when prepared like rice, for children who are a little beyond the age of infancy.

4. DECOCTION OF ICELAND LIVERWORT.—An ounce of the liverwort must be carefully freed from the moss, fragments of stalks, and particles of dirt, with which it is frequently mixed, by rubbing it between the hands in cold water. Then steep it, for two hours, in such a quantity of cold water as will completely cover it; after which it must be bruised, pounded, or cut, and the steeping continued for three or four hours longer in a fresh quantity of boiling water, which, when the steeping is finished, must be strained off by pressure. The liverwort is then to be put into a quart of fresh water, and kept boiling until the fluid be reduced two-thirds, or to a pint and a quarter. When strained and allowed to cool, it forms a thick mucilage, free from any bitter taste; and may be rendered very palatable by the addition of sugar and lemon juice; or by white wine, in those cases which permit the use of wine.

This decoction of liverwort* is an excellent demulcent

solved. The person who makes a decoction of either must determine by trial if it be too thick or too thin. For a convalescent sick person they may be sweetened and seasoned with a little wine; for a child sweetened only.

Amer. Ed.

* This is the celebrated Iceland moss, the Lichen Icelandicus, which was a fashionable remedy in consumption a few years since, but for some cause or other, has lost its credit, and is now seldom spoken of or used. It is superseded by another plant, the Liverwort, which is known to botanists by the

nutriment, in consumption, dysentery, and in convalescence from acute diseases, and particularly after the whooping-cough, in which case the bitter need not be completely removed, as it tends to invigorate the digestive organs.

5. **WHITE-WINE WHEY.**—To make this whey, put half a pint of milk diluted with a quarter of a pint of water into a saucepan, which must be placed on the fire uncovered. Watch the moment when the milk boils, which may be known by the frothing and rising up of the milk to the top of the pan; pour into it, at that instant, two glasses of white wine, and a tea-spoonful of powered sugar, which should be previously mixed with the wine. The curd will immediately form; and, after boiling the mixture for a few minutes, may be separated from the whey, either by letting it settle at the bottom, and then pouring off the whey clear from it, or by straining it through a fine sieve. White-wine whey, when drank warm, promotes perspiration; but, as it is a stimulant, it cannot be given in inflammatory complaints. When cold, it is a very agreeable beverage in low fevers, and in convalescence, when stimulants are admissible.

6. **BALM, MINT, and other TEAS.**—These are simple infusions, the strength of which can only be regulated by the taste. They are made by putting either the fresh or the dried plants into boiling water in a covered vessel, which should be placed near the fire for an hour. The young shoots both of balm and of mint are to be preferred, on account of their stronger aromatic qualities. These infusions may be drunk freely in feverish and in various other complaints, in which diluents are recommended. Mint tea, made with the fresh leaves, is useful in allaying nausea and vomiting.

names of *Anemone hepatica*, and *Hepatica triloba*, possessing a slight mucilaginous bitter, upon which we cannot place any reliance in its power to stay the ravages of consumption, more than upon the Iceland moss.

Amer. Ed

7. **BEEF TEA** is too frequently prepared, by simply boiling a piece of beef in a given quantity of water; but by this method it generally resembles gravy soup more than beef tea, and is then unfit for the use of the sick. To make it properly, cut half a pound of good lean beef into very thin slices; spread the slices in a hollow dish, and having poured over them a pint and a half of boiling water, cover up the dish, and place it near the fire for half an hour, and then boil it over a quick fire for about eight minutes. The tea, after having the scum taken off, should stand for ten minutes, after which it is to be poured off clean, and seasoned with a little salt.

Beef tea thus made is a light and pleasant diluent, and very useful when the bowels and stomach are in a weak and irritable state. When used as a food for infants, it should always be prepared in this manner; and nothing answers better as a breakfast, for those who are habitually sick in a morning, either from a redundance of bile, intemperance, or other causes.

8. **VEAL TEA** is prepared in the same manner as beef tea; and may be used under similar circumstances.

9. **CHICKEN TEA** is prepared by cutting, in small pieces, a chicken, from which the skin and fat have been removed; and then boiling the pieces, for twenty minutes, in a quart of water, with the addition of a little salt. The tea should be poured from the meat before it is quite cold. It is useful in the same cases as beef and veal tea.

10. **TOAST AND WATER** may be made by pouring over toasted bread either a pint of cold or boiling water. In the latter mode it should be made some hours before it is wanted, that it may have time to become perfectly cool.

In some cases of extreme debility, isinglass is sometimes ordered to be taken in small quantities. An ounce, when dissolved in a pint of boiling water, forms, when cold, a light jelly, a tea-spoonful of which may be mixed with tea, or milk and water. A very pleasant beverage may, also,

be made of orange juice and water, with the addition of the isinglass jelly. I am acquainted with a lady, who, after being reduced to extreme weakness by a severe illness, and being incapable of taking any thing solid, recovered her strength, although by very slow degrees, with but little more nourishment than what the isinglass, given to her in every liquid she drank, afforded her. From this case, it would appear to be an excellent corroborant ; but medical men think, that jellies are less nutritive than they are generally supposed to be by those who are not of the profession.

Mrs. L.—I have heard a medical man complain of the ignorance, and even imbecility, which he meets with in many houses, in which a female cannot be found, who can or will dress a wound or a blister ; or who knows how to foment a limb or to apply a poultice : and that these and many other little offices, which can with most propriety be performed by a wife or a mother, are usually done by the rude and careless hands of a hired attendant. Do you not think that this kind of ignorance is disgraceful in a well-educated female ?

Mrs. B.—Until the moment arrive in which such knowledge is practically required, it is too much undervalued ; and our conviction of its importance depends too much, also, upon the urgency of the case, which demands such offices, and upon the extent of our desire to alleviate the sufferings of our relatives. I have, I am sorry to say it, seen some ladies object to do all these little services to an invalid, from over delicacy ; and have preferred the indulgence of weak feelings and false notions, to the humane desire of comforting and alleviating the pains of an invalid friend. Ignorance from this cause, is, indeed, disgraceful. It might be in general avoided, by the early initiation of young women into the minutiae of the sick-room, and by instructing them to regard, in a proper light, the various duties of the female character : thus would false delicacy

be entirely discouraged. I will now describe to you the best mode by which some of the offices to which you allude may be performed.

1. **BLISTERS** are usually spread on leather; and to apply them in a neat and cleanly manner, the surface of the blister plaster should be covered with a piece of gauze, or thin muslin, or very thin Indian paper, cut round so as to leave the margin of the plaster uncovered. The gauze, muslin, or paper, should also be wetted with vinegar, and closely pressed down upon the blister plaster. The part of the body upon which the blister is to be raised, should be washed with lemon juice or with vinegar,* either of which gives activity to the Spanish flies, and promotes the proper rising of the blister. The margin of the blister plaster is generally spread with adhesive plaster, to make it adhere to the part; but, besides this, the plaster should be confined, by a bandage, to the part upon which it is intended that it should act. It should be allowed to remain on until a blister have risen, which usually happens within twelve hours, but not longer; for to keep on a blister plaster longer than is necessary to effect its purpose, is not only useless, but if the cuticle have given way, the acrid matter of the flies is liable to be absorbed and to produce strangury. On removing the blister plaster, the vesicle, when the blister is not intended to be kept open, should be cut with a pair of scissors at the most depending part, without removing the cuticle, which should be allowed to remain on the part until it peel off. The vesicated part should be covered with a pledget of lint, spread with spermaceti ointment; and this should be renewed once a day, till the place heals. In some irritable habits, and occasionally in children, the blistered part, instead of healing kindly, becomes a spreading sore, which is extremely difficult to heal.

* Or with warm soap suds.

When this happens, warm emollient poultices should be applied twice a day, the part should be bathed with tepid milk and water, and the strength supported with bark and a mild nutritious diet. When the blistered part is intended to be kept open, or to be made what is termed a perpetual blister, the cuticle of the vesicle, made by the blister plaster, should be removed, and the part from which this skin has been taken, should be covered with sabine or some other acrid ointment, spread on lint cut to the size of the part intended to be kept in a discharging state. But care must be taken always to cut the lint exactly of the same size, otherwise the issue ointment when applied to the sound skin inflames it, and in irritable habits is apt to bring on an attack of erysipelas. A perpetual blister should be dressed once in twenty-four hours. The dressing is easily kept on by two strips of adhesive plaster, applied cross-ways.

2. ISSUES.—A perpetual blister is an issue. but other issues are discharges kept up, by pease or the small Curasso oranges, put into a hollow wound, previously made in some fleshy part of the body, by means of caustic, or by the knife of the surgeon. A seton is another kind of issue made by passing either a skein of thread, or a piece of cord, or some gum elastic, beneath a portion of the skin. In the pea-issue, the pease swell in the issue, and, consequently, should be renewed once a day, and the discharge cleared away with a wet sponge, before fresh pease are put in. When the hollow appears to be filling up, the surgeon should be applied to, in order that it may be again deepened by a fresh application of the caustic. In the seton, the threads or cord should be moved once a day, and the discharged matter cleared away, also, with a sponge. In languid habits, it is sometimes necessary to smear the pease and the cord of the seton with sabine ointment.

3. WOUNDS are generally dressed by a surgeon; but in chronic cases, and those cases in which it would be hazardous to heal up old wounds, it is convenient for a patient

to be able to dress them without the aid of a surgeon, and the method of applying a roller to a leg should, therefore, be generally known. Old wounds should be cleaned with a sponge and tepid water every day, and clean dressings applied. To apply the roller, which should never exceed two inches and a half in breadth, begin at the foot, and, after making two or three turns round it, make one round the ankle, and again round the foot, for two or three successive times (see *a*, in the cut): then proceed to roll the leg upwards till you arrive at the swell of the calf, when you must give the bandage a kind of half turn outwards (*b*), before carrying it each time round the leg, so as to make it ply to the shape of the limb; and continue to do so till it reach the knee, where it must be secured by two small pins (*c*). A bandage well rolled, should press equally on



every part of the limb, and remain on for any length of time without becoming slack. It should have also a neat appearance, and not make the limb too clumsy.

4. **POULTICES** are intended to assist the suppuration of inflammatory tumours which cannot be put back ; and they are used, too, for softening the lips of ulcers, that have been hardened by a thick and acrid discharge. They therefore require to be large, soft, hot, and frequently renewed. Some poultices are made, by boiling together crumbs of bread and milk or water, and adding a small quantity of oil or lard ; others are made by simply mixing a quantity of linseed meal, with as much boiling water as will make it into a moderately thick paste. For the sake of cleanliness, a piece of thin gauze should be placed between the poultice and the part to which it is to be applied, provided the part affected be not ulcerated. A poultice should not be so thin as to run or spread, nor so thick as to become soon dry and hard. When a poultice is intended to promote suppuration, it should be renewed as soon as it gets cool.

5. **FOMENTATIONS** are, generally, decoctions of mucilaginous or narcotic vegetables. But as the best of these, when externally applied, have very little medicinal virtue, flannels wrung out of boiling water, are of equal, if not of superior use to any of them. The flannels should be about two yards long, and sewed together at the ends, so that by means of two sticks, turned in opposite directions, they may be wrung perfectly dry from the boiling water. They should be applied lightly over the part to be fomented, which thus becomes involved in an atmosphere of hot vapour, without the bed and linen of the patient being wetted. As soon as one flannel begins to cool, another should be wrung dry from the water, and be applied to the part, in the instant the other is withdrawn from it.

6. **FRICTION** is frequently ordered to be employed in cases of painful and swelled joints, but it is rarely well

applied. Friction will be of little benefit unless it be done briskly, and continued each time, for half an hour or upwards. The embrocations and liniments which are sometimes ordered are, often, in themselves of trifling value as remedies, and are prescribed more with the view of securing the regular performance of the friction, than from any benefit expected from them. The best mode of rubbing is by short, quickly repeated strokes with the points of the fingers; and when, after the friction has been continued for some time, the hand becomes heated, it should be smeared with a little flour, provided the friction be not accompanied by the use of any liniment.

Mrs. L.—Are there any other circumstances connected with health, with which it is desirable for a young married woman to be acquainted?

Mrs. B.—It is very important for her to be in some degree acquainted with those connected with the period of childbirth, which, the first time it occurs, forms an epoch in the life of a woman, and necessarily engages much of her attention both in respect to the event itself, and to the preparations requisite for it.

Let us examine with what feelings it is both natural and proper she should view this event, as soon as she becomes aware of its probable occurrence. I do not know what are the most usual sensations which this anticipation excites, because I have conversed so little with any one on the subject; but it appears to me very natural to consider domestic happiness as incomplete, if children, the objects of our best affections, are denied to us. At the same time, it is also natural for every young married woman to see the approach of her first confinement with anxiety, because she is ignorant of the degree of suffering which she has to surmount before her moment of rejoicing can arrive; and this suffering is left to the imagination to portray, which never tells the exact truth, whether it describe the prospect of our pleasures or our pains. She may also have

some difficulty in divesting her mind of the idea of the peril which she must encounter in becoming a parent ; but for all these fears one great antidote is to be found, an unshaken reliance on God, from whom she can best derive strength and comfort, and in whose hand her life rests, both at that season and every other. Besides this chief support, reasoning justly upon her situation, will carry conviction to her mind, that in this event there is always more reason to indulge hope than fear. What she has to undergo, is no disease, but a natural event, for which her frame is formed ; and her body can well endure the pains which attend it, if she discipline her mind to support them. I believe any medical man will tell you, that there is no event the result of which is so dependent as this, upon the state of mind with which it is met : and this being the case, it points out to every woman the duty of cultivating fortitude and composure of mind, that they may be at hand always, and particularly at such a moment, when the sufferings are great and the feelings peculiarly excited.

Mrs. L.—Can you give me any idea of the extent of the preparations for the event in question, and, also, what expense must *necessarily* be incurred in these preparations ?

Mrs. B.—I will give you a list of most of the articles which are essential, and which may be purchased at a ready-made linen ware-house. If, however, these articles can be made at home, the expense is considerably less.

I hope you will not be inclined to run into a folly, not unusual with young mothers, in providing a useless number of each article, and of having them made in a too costly and extravagant manner ; forgetting that the infant's state of unconsciousness denies it pleasure from any outward circumstances, except those which contribute to its well-doing and comfortable feelings. All that a rational mother will desire in respect to the clothing of her infant. is, that it should be light and warm, and tolerably fine and soft, in

order that it may not rub the tender skin ; and that every different article should be provided in such numbers, as to allow of extreme attention to cleanliness. From the constant inclination of infants to throw up any superabundance of food which their stomachs have received, and from the nature of that food, it is very difficult to keep them free from a sour smell ; and yet it is important to do so as much as possible, because the air an infant breathes cannot be pure, if it convey to it any smell from its clothes.

The additional clothes which the lady requires during her confinement, are not very numerous. While she is confined to her bed she should change her linen every day, and this renders a considerable stock of night-clothes necessary ; but these we will suppose every one to possess. Therefore, what she will require in addition is, a wrapping gown.

For the infant, some ladies provide a dozen of most of the articles of which I give you a list, but others consider eight of each sufficient. Eight shirts ; eight night-caps ; four day flannels ; four night flannels ; eight calico gowns ; six dozen of napkins.

Besides these articles, day caps, robes, mantles, and petticoats are to be provided, the expense of which can be determined only by the taste of the individual who has to choose them. The expense of providing all the essential articles, in a handsome manner, may be calculated at twenty-five pounds, though many ladies will spend upwards of fifty. Before the labour commences every thing which will be required should be prepared. All the various articles of dress, which will be wanted at the first dressing of the infant, should be placed in a flat basket, in the order in which the nurse will require them. At the top of the basket should be a paper of strong thread, a small quantity of fine, soft linen, a pair of scissors, and a small flannel cap. These, being all required the instant the birth takes place, should be laid ready by the nurse, so that they may

be handed immediately to the accoucheur. After these the receiver will be wanted, which is a square of fine, soft, Welsh flannel, which the nurse holds, and receives the infant in it from the hands of the accoucheur. A very fine, soft flannel band should then lie ready for the nurse, to wrap round the child as soon as it is washed. This should be rather more than three quarters of a yard in length, and the half of a quarter of a yard in width. Some nurses pin this band on the infant, but pins should never be allowed to be used in any part of the clothing of an infant. It should either be sewed on, or there should be narrow tapes attached to it, at proper distances by which it may be tied on.

Much diversity of opinion exists, with regard to the best method of clothing a new-born infant. Nothing is certainly more absurd than to dress it for exhibition. On the contrary, the fewer the articles of clothing are, the better it will be, provided that the dress be made of warm materials. Whatever seems most consistent with the previous habits of the little being that has just been ushered into the world, should be in every way studied; and therefore it follows, that all bindings and every article of dress which fits tightly to the body ought to be avoided. The best dress for a new-born infant, in the opinion of the medical friend, whose opinions I have just read to you, is a loose robe, without sleeves, or with very wide ones, and consisting simply of a square of very soft flannel, made to button at the chest, and slightly bound with a belt round the waist. It should be of sufficient length to cover the feet of the child, but should not be too long. The same gentleman is of opinion, that newly-born children should have no caps. Whatever dress is adopted, pins, as I have already said, should not be used, but every thing should be fastened with tapes.*

* This precaution requires the attention of American ladies, as infants are frequently pricked with the pins most commonly employed in dressing them.
Amer. Ed.

Mrs. L.—Having discussed the subject of dress, inform me now, what other points of importance require to be attended to in the lying-in room.

Mrs. B.—The room in which the confinement is to take place, should be as spacious as the house will afford, and capable of being well ventilated, without exposing the lady who is confined to any current of air. It should also be removed as far as possible from the noise, either of the house or of the street.

The character and qualifications of the monthly nurse will require much attention.

Being obliged to have such immediate intercourse with her, and intrusting her not only, in some degree, with your own life, but also with that of the frail little being to which you have given birth, her character and conduct are of the greatest moment to you. She should be sober, temperate, and honest; cleanly in every habit, quiet in her movements, no gossip, nor snuff-taker, and certainly not a *fine lady*. With regard to other essential qualifications, it is much to be lamented that, in these, our monthly nurses are deficient. Often, when they commence their career in that capacity, they are utterly ignorant, and are indebted to experience alone for all the information they possess respecting the nature of the duties which they undertake to perform.

In France it is very different. Young women are selected in each of the departments, to be educated for this service. They are sent to Paris, where, in the admirable establishment, l'Hôpital de la Maternité, they receive every instruction requisite to prepare them for their vocation. In this respect, it would be more beneficial and creditable for us to imitate our neighbours, than in many of those customs and practices which are so liberally imported, but not always for our benefit. The best qualities which we can hope to find in our English nurses, are modesty, a willingness to be directed, and a disposition to adhere,

conscientiously, to the instructions which they receive from medical attendants.

In respect of age, a monthly nurse should not exceed sixty years, but it is still better if she be between thirty-five and fifty years of age. She should possess bodily strength sufficient to enable her to lift her charge with ease; she should be a light sleeper, or rather be capable of doing with very little sleep; and as this would be incompatible with the habits of a glutton, or of one fond of ale and porter, we will suppose that she is free from any inclination towards intemperance. She should be tender, kind, and gentle in her manner, yet tolerably lively; should have great command over her temper, and have so much self-possession, that, under any circumstances, even the most alarming that can occur, she should be able to maintain a cool and collected manner. These qualities should not, however, be accompanied by conceit, nor too much dependence on her own knowledge and experience, which might, unfortunately, induce her to neglect sending for the medical attendant, when his advice and directions might be of the last importance. Above all things, she should not be addicted to quackery, nor should she ever presume to prescribe medically either for the mother or the child.

As the lying-in room should always be well ventilated, so should it, always, be neat and clean; and the nurse should not be above attending to these niceties herself, and performing as many of the little offices about the room, as her duty to the mother and the infant render compatible. She should be ever prepared, to anticipate the wants of the lady she is nursing; and in regard to the infant, who is the creature of habit, her great care should be to induce every habit of regularity and cleanliness. Some nurses have been so expert in this, that the infant, from the first, has been laid awake in its crib or cot, at the proper hours for its sleep, and has quietly and placidly closed its eyes,

obedient to this tacit word of command. Other nurses have indulged themselves and the infant, by keeping it dozing on the moving knee ; and thus have induced a habit, which has prevented it from ever closing its eyes, unless lulled in such a manner. There are other habits, also, connected with cleanliness, which the nurse has greatly in her power to form.

A nurse should be taught the art of emptying the mother's breast by suction when the infant is weakly, and the supply of milk great ; for, then the breast becomes turgid, and the efforts of the infant are insufficient to draw it, until it has been previously relieved, either by suction or some other means. It is certainly a better plan to have the breasts drawn by the human mouth, than by any of the various contrivances which are invented for that purpose. Sore nipples, which are so painful, and so disappointing to the young mother, who is generally desirous of fulfilling every part of her maternal duty, are the consequence of this turgescence, which excites inflammation. And, here, let me mention, that when the nipple becomes sore, the shield is the best remedy ; and a nurse should know how to render this little instrument serviceable, for unless it be properly applied, the intention for which it is used will be defeated. All salves and washes are useless without the aid of the shield. Some ladies, who have never suffered any inconvenience from sore nipples, have attributed their escape to the habit, which they had adopted for some weeks previous to their confinement, of washing the nipples with weak brandy and water ; and this, they imagined, hardened the skin so as to prevent it from being affected by the suction of the infant. But I believe, that the more certain method to prevent this evil, is to guard against inflammatory tendencies in the breast, by having it frequently drawn, so as to empty it, more completely than can be done by the infant, during the first fortnight or three weeks of the confinement.

A nurse should not be of an avaricious disposition, otherwise, to visit the lying-in room is quite a disgraceful tax upon the friends of the lady. The terms upon which the nurse attends for the month should be settled at the time she is first engaged ; and every lady, who has any feelings of delicacy, will explain to her, at the same time, that she is to expect nothing beyond her just pay ; and that any expectations of receiving money from visitors must be entirely abandoned. Every one complains of this imposition, but few have the spirit to abolish it as far as they are themselves concerned. Giving caudle at these lying-in visits is, now, scarcely ever done ; and it is a custom properly disused, as it only served as a plea for *exact*ing a half crown fee to the nurse. . .

I have already mentioned that, as the moment of confinement approaches, every thing should be in readiness, so that no hurry nor bustle occur. One friend, who possesses some considerable degree of fortitude, the nurse, and the accoucheur, are the only persons who should be admitted into the room during the labour. If the accoucheur be a sensible man, he will neither talk much himself, nor allow others to do so ; but whatever conversation is permitted, should be of a cheerful and encouraging description ; all depressing passions, want of confidence in the medical attendant, and alarm of any description, inasmuch as they weaken the powers of the animal economy, and protract the sufferings of labour, also tend to interrupt the natural steps of the process, and cause difficulties which would not otherwise happen. Every female should be previously informed, that, unless some unforeseen difficulty present itself, the child of a *well-formed woman*, may be born without manual assistance ; and, therefore, the less the accoucheur interferes, or appears to aid her efforts, the more his skill is to be depended upon. When malconformation, or other causes, however, present obstacles to the progress of the natural process, then the

mind of the individual should be made up to bear with fortitude and resignation, whatever may be requisite for her relief; and, next to her reliance on Divine Providence she should place implicit confidence in her medical attendant. When the child is born, and she is, therefore, in some degree relieved from her state of suffering, she should be restrained from any lively expressions of joy; for, although it is natural and proper for her to feel thankful for her deliverance, yet the expressions of joy would be dangerous to her at the time in which so much of her strength is exhausted. Many of the fatal occurrences in childbed have been attributed to the want of this precaution. Rest, and, if possible, sleep, should be obtained for two or three hours, before the young mother be laid comfortably in bed after delivery. After this has been done, the infant should be brought to her, and should be applied to the fountain of its natural and only proper food. When medicine is requisite, the accoucheur will order it, but on no account should the nurse be allowed to administer it without his orders.

It is a very common practice in monthly nurses to keep an infant from its mother's milk for two or three days after its birth: this is equally bad for the parent and child. The first milk which the child draws acts as a purgative upon it, while its sucking keeps the parent's breast soft and pliable, and brings the milk into the proper channel. For these reasons, the infant should be placed at the breast three or four hours after its birth, and this should be repeated as often as the mother's strength will permit it. When, however, there is a strong inflammatory disposition in the mother, the early application of the child to the breast is insufficient to keep down the milk, and sore nipples are the consequence. If a lady is to suckle her infant, the sooner it is applied to the breast, the less chance there is of the nipples becoming sore: but in some constitutions this will occur, in spite of every precaution; and

when it does, the child should be kept from the breast until the milk has been nearly carried off by purgatives and low diet; then the child being again placed at the breast causes a return of the milk, while the breast and nipple remain cool. My medical friend has informed me that he saw this experiment succeed with a lady who had had six children, not one of whom she had been able to suckle before. Until the infant can be applied to the mother's breast, its aptitude for sucking should be kept up by placing it at the breast of a temporary wet nurse.

In washing an infant during the month, the water should be tepid; for water either too cold or too hot is equally injurious. The whole body of the infant, with the exception of the head, should be immersed in the water when it is washed. If a nurse be so ignorant as not to know what will take off the white mucous matter, which, occasionally, adheres to the skin of a newly-born infant, you should be able to inform her, that it is most readily loosened by rubbing the part over with lard or fresh butter; after which a little soap will remove the whole.

Some nurses have a bad custom of stuffing an infant with sugar and butter, for the purpose of evacuating the contents of the bowels; but this should never be permitted. The first milk of the mother is purgative; but if medicine be necessary, the medical practitioner will order it. Care, however, should be taken, that the bowels of the infant be cleared in less than twelve hours after birth.*

Mrs. L.—How soon is it usual for a lady to leave the lying-in room?

* This is usually done in this country by giving the new-born infant a little warm molasses and water, or sugar and water, which is necessary to purge off the meconium or black matter which is found in the bowels. The mother's milk will produce further evacuations, but as this does not usually come until the second or third day, the nurse should not delay to give the sugar or molasses, but they should not be mixed with butter or fat.—*Amer. Ed.*

Mrs. B.—That must depend in a great measure upon her progress towards recovery, and also upon the state of the weather. Whatever exertions she makes should bear only a due proportion to her strength, there being few circumstances in which a woman is more likely to retard the recovery of her strength by over exertion, than in child-bed. Her frame has undergone a struggle, which has caused much loss of strength, and, for the renovation of which, time must be allowed. In this state she is, also, more than usually susceptible of cold, and, therefore, great care should be taken to keep her from experiencing any sudden transition from a hot to a cold temperature. If, however, at the end of six or seven days her strength permit, it will be very desirable for her to be removed for an hour or two into another room, provided it be not very remote from her own, and that it be brought to a similar temperature. During the time she is absent from her own room, the nurse should see that it be thoroughly ventilated. This change of air will assist to strengthen her: but there is usually a prejudice, almost unconquerable, in monthly nurses, that ladies should not change their rooms for the first fortnight or three weeks of their confinement, which system has often so weakening an effect, that, at the end of the month, a lady is sometimes as weak and reduced, as if she had had a serious illness. The opinion I am giving in favour of this early change of air, is under the supposition that the whole of the confinement has proceeded without any drawbacks. When the case is otherwise, the lady must of course be directed by the orders of her professional adviser, in this as well as in other respects.

At the end of the month, or even before that time, if the weather and other circumstances permit, gentle exercise is very desirable for the lying-in lady, and particularly if she suckle her baby; because, whatever tends to give her health and strength, will render her better able to per-

form that important duty. Violent exercise, on the contrary, would be as prejudicial, its effects being either to inflame the milk, or to diminish it in quantity.

The office of suckling, is, I am sorry to say, considered by many mothers as troublesome and irksome, and as depriving them of that freedom, which is valuable to them for the purpose of amusement and dissipation. Unless a woman can resolve to give herself up in a great measure to the performance of this duty, conforming her habits, as much as the circumstances in which she is placed will permit, so as to enable her to discharge it in a manner beneficial at once to her baby and to herself, she had better abandon it altogether, and leave the maternal office to be supplied by a hired nurse. Thus, late hours, much dancing, frequent and long absence from her nursling, would render her a bad nurse; and, consequently, her child would be puny and delicate. But I am persuaded there would be few mothers who would not yield up willingly these gratifications, if they were sufficiently aware of the blessings they might procure for themselves and their offspring by discharging this duty.

If we examine how far the mother is benefitted by this practice, I believe we shall be supported by the opinion of medical men, if we assert, that, in *most cases*, health is promoted, and sometimes established by suckling; and that, in many instances, constitutional diseases have been checked in their progress, if not entirely subdued by it. This is, certainly, a strong argument in favour of the practice; life being a blessing to the healthy, but a burden to the diseased; yet still more powerful inducements to maternal affection and solicitude are to be drawn, from the hopes of securing not only present health to our offspring, but of establishing in them sound and vigorous constitutions, which can scarcely be done by any less natural means of rearing them. It is true that, occasionally, a child may be brought up *by hand*, with tolerable

success, and he may be pronounced healthy and thriving: but the experiment is a lottery in which there are many hundred blanks for one prize. In children brought up by hand, there is always less probability of their enjoying so vigorous and firm a state of health, even in after life, as is usually found in other individuals, who, with natural constitutions equally vigorous, have had the additional privilege of receiving, during the first nine months of life, the nourishment which nature has provided for the infantile state. I will read you a short passage from Dr. Carpenter's Treatise on Moral Education, which gives also another gratifying motive to the young mother to nurse her child.—“What may with propriety be termed the *natural* affection of children towards their parents (arising without the exercise of reflection at all, merely by the operation of the associative principle), is, we apprehend, almost always the strongest towards the mother: at least if she has also been the nurse: and as the pleasurable feelings of infancy do greatly contribute their share towards the formation of more complex pleasures, and as they cannot be replaced but by a long series of exertions, a mother who wishes to possess the highest degree of her children's affection, and the greatest influence in the regulation of their conduct and dispositions, must also be their nurse.”

In the sentence which follows, he gives his reasons for this assertion; but as it would detain us too long from other subjects to read it now, I will close the book; but not without recommending it for your perusal at some future period.

Mrs. L.—How should infants be managed during the month? Are monthly nurses qualified to have the charge of them without any superintendence?

Mrs. B.—Their experience gives them a certain degree of knowledge, and enables them to dress and wash an infant with more facility, and with greater gentleness, than can be done by less practised hands; but their prejudices

are often unconquerable in favour of ignorant and vulgar practices, by which an infant may be tormented, if not seriously inconvenienced ; and for this reason I would have the young mother learn what is right to be done, and then be prepared to oppose firmly any contrary modes which her nurse may suggest.

Mrs. L.—Oblige me with some directions, which may stand in the place of experience.

Mrs. B.—I have already told you how an infant should be washed for the first time ; and I recommend the same plan to be pursued again if the skin of the infant does not appear to be thoroughly cleansed after the first washing. Afterwards it is not necessary to wash an infant more than once a day, except locally, as circumstances point out.

The nurse should, in the morning, have in readiness a basin of tepid water, a very soft sponge, and a fine soft towel. On her right hand should stand her basket, in which should be laid her dust bag, containing powdered starch, a clean flannel band, and, in proper order beneath, all the other articles she will require in dressing the baby. The nurse herself should wear a flannel apron, upon which she should lay the child while gently extricating him from the clothes which are about to be changed. The head, face, and throat, are then to be washed with the sponge, and to be dried with a soft linen towel. Remember how very tender and delicate the skin of an infant is, and do not suffer it to be rubbed but in the most gentle manner ; indeed, an infant should rather be gently pressed than rubbed with the towel, and particularly under the joints and between the thighs ; the hands, arms, and thighs, should next be washed, and when perfectly dry, the starch powder may be used in those parts which appear at all tender or likely to become chafed ; but unless this be the case, it is better to use no powder of any kind. Drying the skin well, when it has been wetted, is the best mode to

prevent soreness. The infant should not be kept longer undressed than cannot be avoided ; but if it do not appear to be chilled, the nurse may gently rub its head, back, and limbs, with her hand, until there is a general appearance of circulation. As soon as the clothes have been put on, the nurse should dip the end of a soft piece of cambric into warm water, and cleanse the tongue with it. Nurses will, sometimes, employ sugar and water for this purpose ; but unless there be any disease in the mouth, plain water is the best ; and the friction on the tongue should be so gentle as not to occasion the infant to cry out.

When there is hair on the head of an infant, great care should be taken to dry it well after washing ; for, to put a cap on with the hair damp, would be to incur the danger of cold and inflammation in the eyes, or of ear-ache and deafness. A careful nurse will endeavour to guard the organs of sense from any injury ; such as exposing the eyes to a strong glare of light, or the ears uncovered to currents of air.

Mrs. L.—Where do you advise a child to sleep ? In the bed with its nurse, or in a crib or cradle by itself ?

Mrs. B.—I believe that many medical men are of opinion, that a child should sleep apart from its nurse, and they maintain that it is prejudicial to its health to sleep within the reach of the breath of a grown-up person, or to be within the influence of that degree of bodily heat which might occasion perspiration. Another reason against this practice is the danger of overlaying, that is, of a sound sleeper lying upon an infant, whose feeble cry would not be, in such a case, audible. Other people, and among them many whose experience and good sense give weight to their opinion, maintain that infants thrive faster, and sleep sounder, when they have warmth imparted to them, by sleeping either on the arm, or near to their nurses. They instance, as examples, not unworthy of our imitation, our domestic animals, who shelter and nourish their offspring

by the warmth of their own bodies, so long as the feeble state of their young requires such care.

But notwithstanding the advantages of this practice, which I acknowledge, because it bears some analogy to the habits and situation of an infant in its earliest stage of existence, before it entered the world, I am more inclined to recommend the opposite practice, and to have an infant sleep apart from its nurse, either in a cot or a crib; still taking the greatest care, that its bed-clothing be sufficiently warm, and the crib guarded from every current of air. By this plan the infant can scarcely suffer, while by the other, the mother may be made anxious and uneasy, if she either doubt the watchfulness and carefulness of her nurse, or have reason to apprehend her to be less healthy than she ought to be.

Mrs. L.—What are the objections entertained against cradles? They seem to be entirely disused, although infants are frequently rocked to sleep on the knee.

Mrs. B.—The motion of the cradle is considered, in our time, as prejudicial to an infant, by often lulling it into a state of torpor, when nature would indicate its having had a sufficient portion of sleep, thus enabling a nurse to pursue some employment of her own, or to indulge herself at the expense of her nursling's welfare. This is a sufficient objection to cradles; but other persons have advanced a still more serious argument against them, in the supposition that a rocking motion has a tendency to encourage water in the head. They argue that the gentle motion of the knee, which is always discontinued the moment the infant sleeps, is not to be compared to the swing which a careless maid will give the cradle with her foot, for a long time after the necessity for rocking has ceased. Infants may be brought into the habit of composing themselves to sleep at certain hours without the aid of rocking, provided the monthly nurse can be induced to begin the habit by laying the infant awake in its bed; but as she, in general,

is too apt to forget what may be for the comfort of her little charge, or of its nursemaid, after she leaves it, she is scarcely ever willing to adopt any new plan, if she fancy it will be productive of inconvenience or trouble to herself during the month.

The room inhabited by an infant should be of a regular temperature, and as free as possible from any draughts of air; but it ought to be, in the absence of the infant, well ventilated, and at all times kept clean, and free from disagreeable smells. Remember, also, that an infant should never be permitted to remain in a room recently scoured: for the damp arising from a newly-washed floor has been known to bring on an attack of croup.

An infant should not be nursed in an upright position for the first two months of its life. It is painful to see the bent back and weak neck of a young child compelled to support a weight to which they are unequal; yet, most nursemaids, zealous to bring their nurslings forward, will err in this respect, if they be not checked by the command of the parents. I have known some ladies, however, who erred in the contrary extreme; and, by keeping their infants too long in a reclining position, have prevented that gradual increase of strength which might have been acquired by a gentle and timely use of the muscles and bones of the back and neck: and when infants have been brought to this state, it has been difficult to ascertain whether it had been caused by the disuse of the parts, or was the effect of disease. An infant should rarely be taken out of doors for the first month of its life, unless the weather be peculiarly favourable. The extremes of heat or of cold are alike injurious to it; and damp weather is peculiarly so.

When circumstances render it expedient to employ a hired nurse whose milk is several months old, the infant, during some days, should be suckled for a few minutes only at each period of suckling it, lest the milk should prove too heavy for it.

An infant should never be left to sleep alone. Frightful accidents have occurred from negligence in this respect; and, indeed, for the first few days of its life, an infant should not be in its bed for half an hour at a time, without being looked at; for, if it should chance to roll on its face, it has no power to turn itself again, and were it left for any time in this situation, with its face against the blanket or the pillow, it would be in great danger of being smothered. Infants are, also, liable to return from their stomachs any surplus of milk they have received; and when this occurs while they are sleeping, they should be gently lifted up, so that what they vomit may be entirely emptied from the mouth.

The cry of an infant ought never to be disregarded, as it is Nature's voice, which speaks of some pain or suffering. Cries, however, are of different kinds: for example, that of hunger may be soon known; it is short and wrangling; but when the cry is a continued one, and the legs are drawn up, there must be pain. In such a case as this, the breast must not be administered until the pain be removed. Warm bathing, gentle friction on the bowels, examination of the clothes, to ascertain whether any ligature is drawn too tight, should be first tried, and if the infant still appear to be in pain, a *gentle* aperient medicine, or an injection, should be administered. Powerful medicines should be given only by the advice of the medical attendant.

The *red gum* (strophulus) is a slight disease to which infants are liable, and which requires no particular care except to avoid exposure to cold, and to notice and regulate the state of the bowels. The disease called the *rank red gum*, differs from the former only in the size of the pimples, which are larger than those of the common variety, and sometimes form into pustules. The warm bath, in which bran has been boiled is advantageous in this disease. A child should never be bathed imme-

diately after sucking, nor when it is very hungry; but, when the infant is dried and again dressed, it may be put to the breast, and if it has been relieved by the bathing, it will probably fall into a refreshing and quiet sleep. Two persons are required to assist in bathing an infant: one to hold it in the water for four or five minutes, and the other to receive it, on a flannel apron from the bath, and to have soft dry towels in readiness, with which to rub it very gently, but with such a degree of briskness as will prevent the child from experiencing any chill.

The *hiccough*, in young infants, may be stopped either by a little finely-powdered sugar laid on the tongue, or by putting the child to the breast for a few minutes. If the chests of infants are well covered, they will not be very liable to hiccough, as it is often caused by cold air affecting that part.

Indigestion and *acidity* will sometimes cause the bowels of an infant to be too much relaxed; for this, two grains of rhubarb, and three of magnesia, may be given in a little sugar and water; and if, in a few hours, this mixture does not act well, it may be repeated. When the evacuations, although not frequent, yet have a sour smell, a little magnesia, with half a grain of rhubarb, may be given in weak mint water or fennel tea; if slimy and frothy, the dose of rhubarb should be increased, and the magnesia diminished. Wind, when the bowels and stomach do not appear to be affected, is removed by a little weak fennel or mint tea.* The cold striking on the stomach and bowels, during careless washing and dressing, is as frequent a cause of these irregularities in the bowels of infants, as indigestion or the disagreement of food.

If the bowels of a child, who is suckled by a hired nurse, are frequently disordered, the state of health of the

* In this country, where wood is principally burned as fuel, a tea of wood-soot is readily made; and when sweetened, is an excellent remedy for pain in the stomach of infants, arising from wind or otherwise.—*Amer. Ed.*

nurse should be inquired into, her milk examined, and her diet altered, as may be judged expedient, after such an examination.

When infants are troubled with a *cold in the head*, which impedes their breathing through the nose, and consequently their sucking well, it may be relieved by putting the feet into warm salt and water for about ten minutes, care being taken to rub them dry afterwards, and to wrap them up in warm flannel. Fomenting the nose and forehead with warm water is also beneficial *

When *sore eyes* proceed from cold, I have been told that the mother's milk will be found the best application; but I have found that bathing the eyes in warm water, cools the inflammation, unless it has been very great, in which case medical advice should be obtained.

The greatest care must be taken to keep up an equal temperature in the room inhabited by a young infant, but particularly when it is affected by cold: in which case it should not be carried out of it, unless so covered over as to be completely secured from currents of air, or changes of temperature. If the cough attending the cold be severe, and it occur either in the autumn or the winter season, the most effectual remedy will be putting the feet into warm water, as before directed; and to clothe the infant in a flannel waistcoat, if that plan has not been already adopted. This waistcoat should be made of the thinnest and softest materials; should fasten behind, and wrap over at least an inch and a half. It should be worn until warm weather sanctions its dismissal, which should take place by degrees, a piece of the waistcoat being torn away each day, until the remnant may be removed without occasioning any great change in the warmth of the infant's dress.

* When infants have a cold in the head, or what is commonly called the *snuffles*, in which they are so stopped up in the nose as to breathe with difficulty, greasing the nose and forehead with tallow will give them great relief.

Amer. Ed.

The feet of an infant with a cough should be carefully covered : cold feet would have a tendency to fix the cough upon the chest.

When an infant is fed, very great care should be taken not to give the food hotter than what may be supposed to be the heat of the mother's milk. Hot food sometimes occasions a *sore mouth* ; when this has occurred, borax finely powdered and mixed with honey, in the proportion of one tea-spoonful of borax to three of honey, will generally prove a cure, if a little of it is gently applied with the finger to the part affected.

The *thrush* is a disease in the mouth, bearing a resemblance to the accidental soreness which I have just mentioned. It proceeds from some disorder in the stomach and bowels, and is a dangerous disease when neglected. It begins with small white blisters on the tongue and inside of the mouth, which, when unchecked, extend to the stomach and bowels. The borax and honey are the only things which need be tried while the blisters remain white, and the infant has no fever : but if it is attended by too many evacuations, and these have a sour smell, three grains of rhubarb and the same quantity of magnesia may be given, to act as a gentle purgative. But for this complaint, no violent medicine should be given, unless directed by the professional attendant.—Indeed, it is a complaint for which immediate advice should always be obtained ; because it is rapid in its course, when it does not take a favourable turn.

My friend Mrs. F., who has reared twelve children to maturity, has several times told me, that this disease never once occurred to any of her offspring ; and she ascribed their exemption from it, to her strictly prohibiting her infants from having any kind of food, except the natural aliment, during the month. She attributed this disease chiefly to the effect of food given to children, of uncertain heat, and varying thickness. Whether this opinion be

correct, I cannot say, but I have no doubt that too hot food will occasion it. In children who are suckled, the disease is too often caused by the mother's milk being overheated by too full living, or by any violent exertion. As soon as this is ascertained, she should adopt a cooling diet, and drink plentifully of barley water or other diluting liquors; at the same time she must avoid lowering herself too much. There is a milder kind of thrush produced by teething; and this may be best prevented by frequently washing an infant's mouth with cold water, as before advised.

Convulsions are not uncommon to very young children, and arise, generally, from a disordered state of the bowels; sometimes from the pain caused by pins running into their little tender bodies, or from some part of their dress being too tight. Sometimes, but not often, this disease proceeds from a bad organization, and then it is without remedy. Whatever may be the cause of convulsions, whenever they occur, the whole body of the child should be instantly, immersed up to the throat in a tepid bath; but, if warm water cannot be immediately procured in sufficient quantity, the feet and legs should be put, without delay, into as large a quantity as can be obtained, and this will sometimes be enough to check the violence of the attack. As soon as the fit is over, means must be taken to prevent a return; and, as a medical man can best ascertain the cause, it is advisable to call him in immediately.

I think I have furnished you with all the hints which are essential regarding the treatment of infants for the first few weeks of their existence. What more I have to detail relates to their management during weaning.

Before entering, however, upon that subject, let me observe, that if the nurse-maid is inexperienced, to whose charge an infant devolves after the dismissal of the monthly nurse, I should advise the mother to have her infant washed and dressed for some time in her presence, that she may be enabled to form an opinion of the servant's capability

to perform this part of her office. During her superintendence, she may also observe and point out omissions in any part of her duty, or awkwardness in holding the infant. Should it be necessary for the child to have more nourishment than its parent can afford to it, after it is two or three months old, the mother, until she can feel confidence in her nurse, and entertain no doubt of her intention always to obey her wishes and commands, should generally examine the food intended for the infant, in order that she may judge whether it be of a proper consistency, sweetness, and warmth.

If the feeding-bottle be used instead of a spoon, the food cannot be given very thick, which is an advantage attending the use of the bottle ; but it requires the greatest possible care and attention to keep it clean. If food be suffered to remain in the bottle it soon becomes sour ; and, in that state, mere washing in cold water will not render it sufficiently pure : before, therefore, fresh food is put into it, the bottle should be well scalded. The best plan for keeping the bottle sweet, is to scald it once every day in water as hot as the glass will bear, and to place the bottle in such a direction as shall allow the water to run entirely out of it: At other times of the day, after each meal, the dregs of the food should be poured away, and the bottle rinsed well with cold water, and afterwards laid in a basin of clean water, until it is again wanted. Negligence in respect to the cleanliness of the bottle will be the means of disordering the stomach and bowels of the infant. This is, however, the only inconvenience that can attend the use of the bottle. In all other respects it is decidedly better to use it for feeding a child, than the spoon or the boat. It renders the weaning much less difficult ; and, it is impossible, from the bottle, to give the infant too thick food, or to force it too fast into the stomach. It also obliges the child to work for its food, which is in itself an important benefit, as it agrees with its natural mode of

imbibing nourishment. The bottle has another advantage : in the mere act of sucking there is utility : for, in doing so, the infant swallows some portion of saliva, by which its digestion is much assisted.

The time of weaning an infant depends so much upon circumstances, that no fixed period for so doing can be assigned. Sometimes a child may be healthy and thriving, while its parent or nurse is weakly and delicate ; in which case the welfare of both requires the weaning to take place at a very early period ; but if, on the contrary, the child be delicate, and the parent vigorous, it may be advisable to continue the suckling even for an unusual period. When nothing, however, exists to demand a deviation from what is common, a child may, generally, be weaned, without suffering inconvenience, at either seven, eight, or nine months. Care should be taken not to begin weaning an infant when there are any untoward symptoms of dentition.

In every case, weaning should be effected by degrees , and this not more on account of the infant than of the mother. Three or four weeks should be devoted to the accomplishment of this point ; and the child, thus losing by degrees the remembrance of its natural food, will be, by that time, reconciled to the more frequent use of the bottle, and its stomach will be better prepared to receive its future nourishment than it would have been had the weaning been more rapid. The mother, too, will have gradually diminished her quantity of milk ; and what remains after the weaning is completed, should be carried off by brisk aperient medicines. If any hardness continue in the bosom, the milk should be drawn away two or three times by suction in the course of a week or fortnight. Oil rubbed gently on the hardened part will also be found useful.

One opinion seems to be general concerning the food of infants, that immediately after weaning it should be of a

thin consistency, in order to resemble, as nearly as possible, in taste and quality, the natural aliment of which the child has been just deprived. Yet various are the notions concerning the species of nourishment most suitable to the digestive organs of infants; and, like the disputants in the fable of the chameleon, the prejudices and opinions of those in this question may all be right and all wrong. I have never yet met with two children whom the same kind of food would suit equally; indeed, one of the chief difficulties in weaning a child is, to discover the diet best adapted to its constitutional peculiarities. I will, however, mention those which are usually found to suit the majority of children, unless there be peculiar delicacy or disease. Barley gruel, made according to the directions already given, has been found a light and nutritious food when sweetened with loaf sugar, and mixed with new milk. Some ladies have brought up large and healthy families upon rice gruel, sweetened, and mixed with milk; and others, who have been equally successful in rearing their children, have used, in feeding them, Evans's biscuits,* powdered and boiled in milk. Rusks also form a food with which many children have been fed. These require to be boiled in water till they are sufficiently softened to be beaten to a pulp with a spoon, which should be done after the water in which they have been boiled is poured away from them, and while they are warm: they should then be strained through a hair-sieve into a clean basin or jar, and if set in a cool place, may be kept for eight-and-forty hours, but not longer. A table-spoonful of this food mixed with six or seven spoonfuls of new milk put into a small panakin, and warmed over the fire, will be a sufficient quantity for the meal of a young infant. The rusk food is, however, less wholesome than food

* These biscuits, which are admirably adapted for the food of children, are made by a confectioner, of the name of Greenway, in Queen's Buildings, Knightsbridge.

made of biscuit, on account of the yeast with which rusks are made, and which tends to cause fermentation in an infant's stomach ; but it is useful as an occasional change of food. The rusks being sweet, there is no occasion to add sugar to the food made of them. I have known some fine children, who, after being weaned, have been fed upon cows' milk scalded, without the addition of any farinaceous substance : but this will not suit all stomachs. Cows' milk, undiluted, is too heavy for stomachs accustomed to a liquid of a much lighter nature. When there is any accumulation of bile on an infant's stomach, milk is very liable to disagree.

Veal broth, with rice boiled in it, strained, sweetened, and mixed with a little new milk, has been given once a day to children whose bowels are not strong ; and has appeared to agree with them remarkably well. I should be inclined, in most cases, to withhold animal nourishment from children, except milk and that which can be given in the form of broth, until they are a year and a half old. Many people give butchers' meat to infants of nine and ten months old : but, surely, a food of so stimulant a nature cannot be proper for such young children. Unless the power to masticate animal food exist, I cannot help thinking that it is better to withhold that description of diet, lest too great a duty be left for the stomach to perform.

Until the period in which animal food may be given once a day to a child, on account of its increased size and rapid growth absolutely requiring that kind of nourishment, a light and nutritious diet may be formed of milk prepared either with rice, sago, or arrow-root, or of light bread puddings. A pudding, made with the yolk of one egg, a tea-spoonful of flour, and a small cup of milk, mixed together, and boiled about twenty minutes, is a light, yet nourishing meal, for a child of eight or nine months old. Beef, and veal broth, made in the manner already de-

scribed, are also useful, by way of change, in the food of children.

All kinds of pastry and rich cakes are peculiarly unwholesome for children of any age ; but some kinds of fruit, such as apples, baked as if for tarts, are wholesome, and always pleasant to children.

Mrs. L.—At what age should a child be vaccinated ?

Mrs. B.—I hope your question implies that your mind is satisfied of the propriety of vaccination. Of late, the apparent failures of vaccination, as a preventive of small-pox, appear to have shaken the faith of many in this valuable discovery.

Mrs. L.—Your suggestion is correct, although I am not fully satisfied as to the preventive power of the disease ; and I request to hear your opinion on the subject.

Mrs. B.—I do not think that I am qualified to give any opinion on so important a subject : but I will read to you a few remarks on it, by the same medical friend whose observations on the general treatment of disease you have already heard.

“Vaccination was introduced to the notice of the profession and the public by Dr. Jenner, as a mode of producing a disease which, although its immediate effects upon the body are extremely slight, yet has the power of effecting such a change in the human system, as to render it unsusceptible of the infection of small-pox. This opinion originated in the fact, which had been long notorious, that the milkers in the dairy farms in Gloucestershire, to whom cow-pox had been communicated from the cow in the course of their occupation, were not afterwards liable to be affected with small-pox. Many years' experience had confirmed this fact ; and no case, which has come within my knowledge, has tended to invalidate it : but, as the virus could not always be obtained from the cow, Dr. Jenner conceived the idea, that it might be equally effectual as a preventive of small-pox, if communicated

by inoculation from one individual to another: and the observations made, during the first fifteen years, after the introduction of vaccination, seemed to confirm this opinion. The progressive experience, however, of late years, has thrown some doubts upon the accuracy of this opinion; and numerous instances of small-pox occurring in persons who had been vaccinated, and who were supposed to have gone regularly through the vaccine disease, have been recorded. Many cases have, nevertheless, withstood not only the common exposure to the infection of small-pox, but even the introduction of its virus into the system by inoculation.

“The causes of the failures, and the determination of the real value of vaccination as a preventive of small-pox, have become inquiries of great moment to the welfare of the present and succeeding generations. To investigate these, and to ascertain whether the virus of cow-pox has become so weakened, in the series of progressive vaccination from one individual to another, as no longer to produce that change in the human system, which alone can secure it from small-pox; or whether that change be merely temporary, and may, as it were, be worn out in a certain number of years, are questions for the medical philosopher to resolve. In the present stage of the inquiry, the parent has only to consider, supposing that vaccination do not secure those subjected to it from small-pox, whether small-pox, as it has generally occurred in those who have been vaccinated, be not a milder form of the disease than inoculated small-pox; and whether, in all respects, it be more beneficial for the human race to encourage the inoculation for small-pox, or that for cow-pox?”

“In answering the above queries, if we look into medical records, it is difficult to determine which form of the disease is the milder, when the previous circumstances are equal. Thus, after vaccination, when small-pox occurs, the febrile symptoms are generally mild, and almost always

subside on the seventh day, after which the patient rapidly recovers ; but in a few instances the disease has terminated fatally, and the same lamentable result has occasionally happened in inoculated small-pox, although in general it is a very mild disease. We may account for these fatal instances, in part, by admitting that in the one set of cases there may have been some irregularity in the vaccination ; one vesicle only may have risen, and been opened ; or some eruptive disease may have existed at the time that the child was vaccinated ; or some other incident may have prevented the constitution from being sufficiently brought under the influence of the vaccine disease. In the other set of cases, the habit may not have been sufficiently prepared, previous to inoculation ; or some idiosyncrasy may have existed, to render the habit more susceptible than usual of the febrile excitement induced by the small-pox virus. But in the majority of instances, as they have occurred, it would appear that small-pox after cow-pox is, in general, a milder disease than inoculated small-pox. If, however, we admit, that when due care is taken, the small-pox which occasionally follows cow-pox, is only as mild as that which results from inoculation ; still the preference is to be given to vaccination, for this reason, that the inoculation of one subject in a city or a neighbourhood, may be the means of infecting many with natural small-pox, the fatal consequences of which, under the best treatment, cannot be calculated, and are always to be dreaded ; whereas no such result can follow vaccination, the general adoption of which tends rather to eradicate natural small-pox, which has always been justly regarded as one of the greatest scourges of humanity. If these remarks be correct, there can be only one way of answering the question before us, and of determining as to the comparative benefit to be expected from inoculation for small-pox, and from vaccination.

“ With regard to the proper age for vaccinating an infant,

experience has shown that, although it may be proper to defer it for the three or four first weeks of an infant's life, on account of a variety of circumstances connected with that period of life, yet, if the organization of a child be perfect, and if the individual be in good health, the sooner it is vaccinated after the month the better.

"The diseases which interfere with vaccination as a preventive of small-pox, are eruptive diseases, teething, and affections of an inflammatory nature. Under eruptive diseases and teething, the specific irritations which these occasion prevent the fever attending cow-pox from being sufficient for the constitutional change, requisite to secure the child from the infection of small-pox ; and, when acute inflammatory diseases are present, the inflammation of the vesicle may run to an alarming extent, and a sore be produced which can with difficulty be healed. In order to be certain that the constitution has been properly affected, some medical practitioners re-vaccinate the child, on the fifth or sixth day after the original vaccination, with a little of its own lymph : and while the original vesicles proceed regularly to their termination, if those from the re-vaccination be accelerated, acquire the inflamed areola, and scab at the same time with the first, they then declare that the system has been properly affected. This is a good test, and ought not to be objected to by any parent.

"Parents are very apt to object, also, to more than one or two punctures being made in the arm in vaccination ; but in order to secure the constitutional disease, three or four should be made in each arm, and lymph ought never to be taken from any arm, on which there are not two or three vesicles, one only of which should be opened."

Mrs. L.—Are you an advocate for small-pox inoculation *after* vaccination ?

Mrs. B.—I believe it to be too severe a test. Consider how much more virulent a disease it is likely to be, when the poison by which it is communicated is inserted

into the veins and mingled with the blood, than when the infection is conveyed only by natural means ; especially, if it is a fact, (and that it is so, medical men have had sufficient experience,) that after vaccination the formidable nature of small-pox taken accidentally is so greatly subdued.

MRS. L.—The remarks of your medical friend have strengthened the opinions I had previously entertained on the subject of vaccination. Indeed there scarcely appears to be a choice between vaccination and inoculation for small-pox, since the good of society demands that every probable means be employed, by which a scourge, such as the small-pox, may be, if not exterminated, diminished in prevalence and power : and our duty to our offspring equally requires us not to refuse even the probability of securing them from a loathsome disease, the effects of which sometimes remain in the constitution through life.

MRS. B.—Your opinions appear to me to be just. Uncertainty attends the administering of every remedy for disease, and that the antidote for small-pox shares this uncertainty, is no more a reason why it should be abandoned and disused, than for the entire neglect of many a useful medicine which may sometimes fail in its desired effects. Employ, then, with reasonable hopes, the means of prevention which have been so wonderfully discovered to us. If a failure follow vaccination, you have still gained an advantage over the more formidable disease, by having bestowed a power on the constitution to modify and disarm it of a great portion of its malignity.—And now farewell,—it is time for us to separate.

PART III.

THE REGULATION OF TIME.

CONVERSATION I.

GENERAL REMARKS.—MORNING.—ADVANTAGES OF EARLY RISING.—HABIT MAKES IT EASY AND AGREEABLE.—THE FIRST MORNING DUTY PRIVATE DEVOTION.—MORNING THE BEST TIME FOR STUDY.—FOR THE REGULATION OF HOUSEHOLD AFFAIRS.—SETTLEMENT OF ACCOUNTS.—INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN.—MUCH TIME SAVED BY SKETCHING OUT A REGULAR PLAN FOR THE BUSINESS OF THE DAY.

MRS. B.—Perhaps you will consider it as of little use to talk to you of the value of time, or to remind you how irrecoverably each moment flies away; that we are all approaching with rapid steps, the period at which we must account for the neglect and abuse of the term of years allotted to each of us in this world; and that every day has duties prescribed, which can only be well fulfilled by the appropriate regulation of our time. So hackneyed are such reflections, that although we may acquiesce in their truth, yet, we rarely allow them to influence our conduct. On the contrary, we permit days and years to escape unheeded, and employed to little purpose either to ourselves or to others. The fleeting nature of time, and our

finite existence on earth, we acknowledged to be awful subjects for contemplation, but, alas! how transitory, and, often, how useless is the impression which the thoughts of these truths occasion on our hearts!

Notwithstanding all this, I will not be deterred from pointing out to you, as forcibly as I can, some of the advantages to be obtained by economising time. I have heard those who have passed the meridian of life declare, that the chief cause for regret and remorse which their retrospections afforded them, sprung more from the conviction of having spent the best part of their time in an unprofitable manner, than from any recollections of actual misconduct. The remembrance of our errors may be softened by many circumstances, particularly, when they have been followed by the atonement of repentance and amendment; but, for loss of time, repentance generally comes too late. It is not in the power of youth justly to estimate time. In that season of health and vigour, when the greater part of life, judging by human foresight, lies before us, we can scarcely persuade ourselves that our existence is not for an eternity; at least the unwelcome truth is only acknowledged at a later period, when our faculties begin to be impaired, or when the powers of our minds are enfeebled by indisposition. Then it is that we exclaim at the shortness of life, and on the vain use we have made of it; and then, when we would strive to redeem lost time, we discover the attempt to be impossible. Our intellectual powers appear to us spell-bound, and unable to grant us the aid which at an earlier season, we might have claimed. Memory has lost its tenacity, and judgment its clearness and decision; and unavailing regret is the only fruit of time wasted and talents misapplied. This regret, I am afraid, is the portion of the many, while the few only can look back with entire satisfaction on their past lives, having the consciousness that they have neither hidden the talents intrusted to them,

nor employed them in any manner injurious to society nor to themselves.

I hope, my young friend, that such pleasurable retrospections will one day be yours; but they must be purchased, even now, by the abandonment of every indolent habit and frivolous pursuit. This at first may be irksome to you; but you will, in the end, discover that you have secured the *substance*, and given up only the *shadow* of enjoyment. Vapid, joyless, and splenetic is the close of that life, of which the commencement has been unprofitably employed, while cheerfulness and serenity generally mark the old age of a well-spent youth.

Mrs. L.—I am convinced of the truth of your remarks; and, although I may not be able to regulate my time as advantageously as I desire, yet I still wish to form a plan, and to pursue it with as few deviations as circumstances will permit. Tell me, therefore, how you would dispose of the morning.

Mrs. B.—The morning is the best part of the day for the discharge of every employment connected with the business of a family; and also for pursuing any private study.

But before I proceed, I must again talk to you of the advantages of *early rising*. In a former conversation, the habit as recommended for its beneficial effects upon the constitution. Now we will consider it only in regard to those it produces in the regulation of a family. To speak of a lady as an early riser, is almost to proclaim her house to be orderly and well-managed. When the heads of a family remain in bed until late in the day, their servants, imitators of most of their habits, are sure to become sluggards: self-indulgence being one of the sins of our nature, from which we must not expect our dependants to be more exempt than ourselves, especially when they perceive, that few efforts are made on our part to subdue it.

Mrs. L.—It is very difficult to persevere in the habit

of rising early in London, where late hours of visiting prevail.

Mrs. B.—Certainly it is, because without an ample portion of rest and sleep, health would be impaired, and bad health is as subversive of good management and order as irregular habits. But, although constant dissipation and its consequent late hours are to be regarded as destructive of a wise regulation of time, yet I have known one or two instances of ladies, who, leading what many sober-minded matrons would consider to be dissipated lives, have continued to persevere in the habit of early rising; and by that means have fulfilled duties which must, otherwise, have been omitted. You probably remember Mrs. Y——, who herself educated her niece, and in a very superior manner:—yet she was generally considered as a woman devoted to amusement and society. Her house was the resort of the gay and the fashionable, and she was so often seen amidst the gayeties of the metropolis, that no one who was unacquainted with her habits would have guessed that she could find time to discharge the duties of an instructress, and with so successful a result. The hours she devoted to her niece were from six in the morning till ten o'clock, her breakfast hour; after which she did little else than attend to the calls of amusement. This habit of early rising she always preserved; and, as she was rarely indisposed, I have no doubt it was one of the means by which her health was preserved; for her other habits were unfavourable to the continuance of that blessing. The lady of Captain G——, also, afforded a similar instance of the benefits of early rising. She was the mother of a large family, to the number of which she was yearly adding; yet she arose at six o'clock every day, and until the breakfast hour, devoted herself to the superintendence of household concerns, and to the instruction of some of the younger children. Nor was this all: she often investigated the state of her children's

wardrobe, cut out the new clothes, and pointed out to her needle-woman the old ones which required to be repaired. After breakfast she devoted two or three hours more to the general superintendence of her servants and children, and then pursued her various schemes of amusement and dissipation for the day. I must, however, acknowledge to you, that notwithstanding this valuable habit of Mrs. G——, her family was not altogether well managed. She was, too frequently, absent from home, which gave liberty to her governess and servants to relax from their duties. I am not citing, indeed, either of these ladies as examples of domestic management, but only to point out how much good may be done by this habit of early rising; and how much more might both these individuals, with the abilities which they possessed, have performed, had their love of pleasure been more limited.

Mrs. L.—It requires much more resolution than I possess to be an early riser, particularly in the winter; nor do I ever feel, after rising early, that I am in that vigorous state which you describe to be its effect; and, certainly, I have never yet found myself able at that time of the day either to study or to devote myself to useful employments.

Mrs. B.—You cannot have persevered in the practice, until it had settled into a habit, or you would not make this complaint. An occasional effort will not form a habit; and it is habit alone that makes those things pleasant and agreeable, which, in the first instance, oppose our love of self-indulgence. To break an old habit, and to form a new one, is never easy nor pleasant; and a certain probationary state must be endured, before success, and the satisfaction which accompanies it, can be enjoyed.

Whether we rise early or late, you will agree with me, that our first morning duty is to offer prayers and praises to God. What can be so natural and proper, as to dedicate our first thoughts to Him? He it is who has protected us through the dangers of the night, who restores

us each morning from a state almost approaching to death, to one of enjoyment and usefulness : and he it is who showers down blessings upon us, so abundantly, and so infinitely greater in number than we can expect or deserve.

In a devotional mind, such thoughts as these daily recur, and yet they require to be encouraged by religious exercises, before their fervour is lessened by the obtrusion of the daily cares or pursuits of a busy and anxious existence. Besides these offerings of grateful acknowledgments for blessings conferred upon us, it is no less incumbent on us to petition for aid against the time of peril and temptation, that our minds may be prepared to encounter the unknown events of the day, whatever they may prove ; and fortified to bear the effects of trials, perhaps unforeseen and apparently improbable.

To our sex, in particular, the support to be derived from this communication with our Heavenly Father, is, indeed, most essential. If weak in spirit and in judgment, from Him we can receive strength. If our virtuous resolutions falter, and we are tempted to wander from the right path, we have but to refer ourselves to God, to seek his guidance in sincerity, and we shall become firm and decisive, no longer doubting the course we ought to pursue.

This duty being performed, I recommend you, if in the pursuit of any study, to devote yourself to it in this early part of the morning. The same undisturbed state of mind, which it is desirable to possess when engaged in religious exercises, is also very advantageous in study. The less engrossed your thoughts are in worldly concerns, the more command you will have over your attention ; and your memory will consequently be more retentive and accurate. If we sit down to read, either with a mind pre-occupied, or with a listless and careless temper, we shall utterly waste our time ; for, unless our attention be fixed upon the subject we desire to study, we shall derive little improve-

ment ; and the information thus obtained will be confused and inaccurate. The advantages of early rising, for the purposes of study, may be easily calculated. . Let us for a moment reflect on the extent of information which any one of moderate abilities might acquire, in seventy-three days, by a close application during ten hours a day ; yet two hours every morning, for a year, are equal to ten hours daily for seventy-three days ; and more than equal, from the time of the day to which they belong, and the vigorous freshness of the mind at that period. How many languages, how much literature, and how many sciences, even the most abstruse, might be acquired in an ordinary lifetime, were only those morning hours regularly devoted to study.

Unless the means of a married woman be so circumscribed in regard to expenditure, that she is constrained to make her own clothes, and those of her children, she ought to consider the cultivation of her mental powers as one of the duties which her Creator will expect from her: too often, indeed, is this object neglected, nay, despised by the notable, and, in other respects, praise-worthy housewife, who deems reading but a species of idleness, and who considers, that to dress well, to attend to the cleanliness and neatness of her house and children, and to feed her family with economy and sufficiency, constitute the whole occupations of her sex, and the end of her being.

Mrs. L.—What part of the morning would you devote to household concerns ?

Mrs. B.—I should enjoin all business of that nature to be settled immediately after breakfast, and before and other employment is begun. Cooks are often much teased by the habit which ladies acquire of deferring the time for giving their orders, until the middle of the day: this is liable to occasion a general hurry and confusion, from the apprehension that the whole of the work will not be accomplished in time. In making your daily round

through your kitchen and the other offices connected with it, you should look around you to see if every thing be in order, and if the morning's work has been properly performed by the domestics. After having given your orders for the day, the cook will be able to tell you what she will require from your store-closet; and, at the same time, your other servants should come to you for any articles, such as soap and candles, which they may require in their separate departments. Once in the week, you should make a point of settling your accounts, and of paying all current expenses. In performing this duty, you will find much anxiety saved, when you balance your cash, if you keep a small memorandum-book, independent of the house-book, which I formerly described to you, in which the money you receive, and that which you casually expend, should be regularly entered. Thus, if you receive ten pounds for housekeeping, enter that sum upon one page, and on the opposite page enter all the sums, however small, that you have expended. Thus, suppose the sums in the page of expenditure, when added together, amount to 3*l.* 4*s.* 3½*d.*, and those paid to the butcher, baker, and other tradesmen, with whom you keep books, are equal to 5*l.* 3*s.* 2*d.*, the total sum of expenditure being 8*l.* 7*s.* 5½*d.*, you should have 1*l.* 12*s.* 6½*d.* remaining in your purse.

The propriety or necessity of attending to such minutiae, depends entirely upon the circumstances and situation of each individual mistress of a family; and where circumstances require this attention to expenditure in all the minute branches of good housewifery, no time of the day can be so suitably devoted to it as the morning. When this business is finished, many ladies find time to instruct their children in some of the branches of their education: and this being accomplished, the rest of the day is, in most cases, free for other pursuits, or for the various demands of our social and relative connexions upon our time.

Mrs. L.—I have been long aware, that an irregular

disposal of time is fatal to good order in a family, as well as a barrier to the improvement of young people, in any of the pursuits to which their attention is generally turned. This I have seen exemplified in a family connected with mine: the mother is an amiable and good woman, and most solicitous to promote the improvement of her daughters in every way; and they, possessing good sense, and more than ordinary abilities, are as desirous to forward her wishes; but by the mother's want of judgment, and her irregularity in the arrangement of their time and her own, all her hopes and expectations are thwarted. She has four daughters, and each of them she decreed should be *all-accomplished*, without taking into consideration the difference between them in character and abilities, and how far any one of them was unable to fulfil her wishes. Almost from the time they began to learn, a great part of each day was devoted to receiving lessons from various masters. No fashionable accomplishment was omitted, not even instruction in any of the whims of the day: shoe-making,—modelling,—the systems of Feinagle and Logier, chemistry and phrenology, have each had their turn. This division of their time and attention has been fatal to that steady application by which a proficiency in any thing can be attained. But this is not the only error committed in their education: the moment each lesson is over, their thoughts are diverted into some contrary channel, before they have had time to digest, or practise upon the instruction they have received. And very often, too, one or two of them are taken from their lessons, to accompany their mother to an exhibition, or to fritter away hours in selecting and bargaining for ribands and lace. Their thoughts are in a perpetual whirl, and they often declare they have not time for any thing. The consequence is evident:—they are only smatterers in accomplishments, while, with their abilities, they might have been ranked as clever and intelligent young women, had they steadily applied to the

attainment of a few objects, instead of vainly attempting to excel in a thousand.

Mrs. B.—Hurrying thus from one pursuit, and from one scene to another, must indeed destroy both the power and the desire of application, and must also check the progress of any mental habits, such as those of devotion and reflection ; proving a barrier to the formation of a well-regulated mind. There is also another habit destructive to economy of time ; I mean procrastination, which is a branch of self-indulgence that entirely defeats its own purpose, by causing an accumulation of business to be always hanging over the procrastinator. This, his conscience tells him he ought not to neglect, but the very thoughts of it overpower him ; and with the irresolution which is an accompanying trait of the failing of procrastination, he is generally a most unhappy being. When this habit is indulged in by the mistress of a family, it involves her in perpetual confusion. If the duties and avocations of yesterday are deferred till to-day, the accumulation must cause a distressing pressure of business both to her servants and herself, and must prevent any part of it from being well performed. In the single circumstance of deferring necessary repairs in clothes and linen, or in neglecting to renew, in good time, such as are wearing out, what inconvenience is the consequence ! Probably whole sets of linen for several different members of a family, are to be furnished at once : and this, in the case of those with limited incomes, can never be done without pecuniary inconvenience ; and, yet, if this supply of linen be neglected until a more convenient time to purchase it, the disreputable appearance of the family must be the alternative. I have seen a striking proof of the advantages of a contrary spirit, in Mrs. D.'s management, who has often been, laughingly, accused by her friends, of performing to-day the duties of to-morrow, and anticipating all its wants. However this may be, her example is most worthy

of imitation by all those who have large families ; for in hers, neatness, order, and comfort, are evident characteristics ; and yet these are preserved without any apparent effort or trouble : and Mrs. D. herself, though she does not enter into general society, yet has always devoted much time to the instruction of her children. They who know her, will also, with one voice, acknowledge, that she has never failed to answer the large demands which friendship and benevolence have often made upon her time and kind offices. This she could hardly have accomplished but for the orderly state in which her family was kept by her skill and foresight.

As much time is saved, or rather gained, by a regular disposal of each division of the day, I recommend to you to plan the whole out every morning ; and as far as you can command circumstances, to pursue that plan steadily. In what regards the business of your family, endeavour to arrange its performance as nearly at the same time of each day as can be conveniently done ; because that will enable your servants to regulate their work accordingly, and it will spare them any confusion or hurry, which must ensue from late orders.—Let every thing be done in order, and in the right season, and you will never be inclined to deny the truth that “there is a time for all things.”

CONVERSATION II.

AFTERNOON.—OCCUPATIONS AT HOME.—LIGHT READING.
 —DRAWING.—MUSIC.—LIGHT AND ORNAMENTAL NEEDLE-
 WORK.—FOLLY OF NEGLECTING THESE ACCOMPLISH-
 MENTS IN THE MARRIED STATE.—OCCUPATIONS OUT OF
 DOORS.—EXERCISE.—VISITING.—SEEING SIGHTS.
 SHOPPING.

MRS. L.—After the duties of the morning are over, there still remains a considerable portion of time to be filled up before dinner. I do not think that any employment requiring steady attention, or freedom from interruption, could be entered upon with great advantage during this period of the day, which is generally open for the reception of occasional visitors.

MRS. B.—There are several occupations to which this part of the day may, notwithstanding, be appropriated; and which may be put aside and resumed without much inconvenience.

I suppose that, during the morning, you have pursued some serious or useful study in private, while your mind remained unoccupied by any of the concerns of the day. Now, then, you will find it expedient to devote the remainder of your time before dinner to various avocations, such as the perusal of any lighter or amusing volumes which you may happen to have near you. Many of these publications of the day will increase or renew your general information, will keep up your acquaintance with the world, and will, at least, afford you an innocent amusement. In this kind of light reading, I include some of our best novels, biography, poetry, travels, and several of the periodical works: and, as you will, probably, frequently

enter into society, such reading may now and then afford you topics for conversation, when that which is afloat seems either to be declining in interest, or to be turned to disagreeable and painful subjects. If, however, to avoid any appearance of pedantry, you do not choose to avail yourself of literary topics, you will still find your reading useful to you, if it only increases your interest in the conversation around you, and give you a readiness in joining in it, and in occasionally sustaining it yourself.

Drawing, music, or light and ornamental needlework will afford you variety in the occupations of this part of the day: these can easily be resumed after the interruption of visitors; indeed, any needlework with which you may be occupied at the entrance of morning visitors, may be continued without any breach of politeness towards them, provided it be not of a nature to divert your thoughts from their conversation, or to cause you to remit any polite attentions.

Mrs. L.—I am tempted to abandon music and drawing altogether, from the apprehension that for want of time to practise both these arts, I shall lose so great a degree of my proficiency in them, that they will soon cease to be valuable either as amusements to myself or to others.

Mrs. B.—Were you to do so, I should not think that you determined wisely. You have absolutely laboured, for the greater part of your life, to attain considerable skill in both these arts, and have succeeded in your efforts; and, because you are married, and have more demands than formerly upon your time and attention, you would, in effect, cast away all your previous exertions. Your friend Maria pursues the contrary system, and although she has the arduous charge of a young family, whom she has never neglected, she contrives to keep in practice most of the acquirements of her youth. Perhaps she is making no progress in them; but still, she has certainly skill enough in these accomplishments to gratify and amuse her husband

and many of her friends ; and, with the aid of her lively conversation, to give a charm to the social parties which often assemble around her. I can scarcely think those persons too severe, who, asserting that women, after marriage, suffer their talents to fall into disuse, conclude that they have previously cultivated them rather for the purpose of attracting notice and admiration, than from the higher view of acquiring powers, by which domestic life may be gladdened and adorned. Many sensible people consider it a grievous mistake in female education, that the most valuable years of youth are spent in acquiring and cultivating arts not essential to the fulfilment of the chief duties of this life ; and which are certainly totally useless in what regards our interests in a future state. Yet, when once this precious time has been given to them, why,—when they *may* be employed to obtain some desirable end,—when they may attach a husband to his home and family circle, or promote the innocent amusement of young people and children, why abandon them, and thus render of no account the hours and the years which have been devoted to their acquirement ?

Accomplishments, too, may be of considerable value to their possessors, independent of the use which they may serve within the social circle. The greater part of a woman's life ought to be, and necessarily must be, passed at home ; the more sedentary resources, therefore, she possesses by which her time may be innocently and cheerfully occupied, the less will she suffer from any occasional privations of society or even of health. Sometimes, a husband is obliged to be frequently, and for long periods, absent from home ; sometimes, there are no children to interest the feelings, and occupy the time and attention of the married woman ;—in such cases, her acquirements and information may be as companions to her, whiling away the hours of solitude, which would, otherwise, be spent in listlessness, indolence, and discontent.

I remember being much struck by hearing, from a medical man, of the almost daily exclamation of a lady of high rank, "Oh! that I could sew!"—She appeared to be surrounded with every gift of fortune, and yet was a miserable woman. She had spent the earlier part of her life in the manner usual with those of her own rank; but certainly not in a way which would render her able to lead a solitary life cheerfully. At the time she was in the habit of expressing this humble wish, she had passed the meridian of life, and although not actually an invalid, yet she was not strong enough to mingle in the gay world. She, therefore, retired to her country seat, to live in comparative privacy. Thus, by necessity, banished from general society, she was completely at a loss for amusement suitable to her state and present situation. She was without any resource to kill time. In reading she had never delighted: she had long abandoned every accomplishment, and she had never known how to use the needle at any period of her life; so that from the time of the commencement of her retirement till her death, she dragged on a miserable existence; wandering with a dull, rapid, and discontented spirit, about her spacious and splendid apartments, or driving through the park, in her coroneted carriage, a daily, monotonous round.

In planning out the occupation of your time, you must not omit to devote some portion of it to brisk and active exercises. As labour sweetens rest, so should exercise give a zest to your sedentary employments. Indeed health cannot be preserved for any length of time without it, and no other acquisition can compensate for the loss of health. The period of the day in which exercise should be taken, depends upon the time of the year and the state of the weather; and, in making your arrangements for the day, these must regulate the hours of walking and of riding. In unsettled weather, the first favourable moment that occurs should not be neglected, for this important

duty : and a duty it is, as health is greatly dependent upon it, and upon health is dependent the discharge of every other obligation.

Morning visits may be paid between the hours of two and five, and the newly-married woman should be careful not to neglect paying these as soon as they are due. Towards a new acquaintance it is considered almost as a slight to defer returning her visit beyond the usual time, unless family occurrences absolutely cause the delay.

The various exhibitions with which the town is full at some seasons of the year may, in general, be viewed more conveniently during the afternoon of the day than at an earlier period. It is the most fashionable time, also, for seeing sights, which, with the young and the gay, is an additional reason why it is the best time to devote to that purpose.

Yet even in these requisite and agreeable occupations, the woman who has passed her morning in useful needlework, in household arrangements, and perhaps in studies which would not disgrace the stronger sex, would regret to fritter away many hours, if what she had to accomplish could be performed in one. The practice, which almost from time immemorial has chiefly characterized the female sex as *frivolous* and even selfish, is that of entering a shop, more for the purpose of looking over every material displayed there, than of making a necessary purchase. To ask for a variety of articles, to criticise, abuse, or praise them, and then to quit the shop, without purchasing any thing, seems to be the delight of many women, while it is considered as the privilege of all. Disgraceful custom ! which establishes a kind of right to treat those with meanness and selfishness who dare not offend us : which hinges on a principle of impertinence, the slightest shadow of which would not be endured by our equals : and which tempts many a female purchaser into extravagance,

wearies the patience of the tradesman, and excites contempt and disapprobation almost universal.

Equally reprehensible is the practice of bargaining, as it is a means of corruption to the shop-keeper. I make it a rule never to employ a tradesman who will take a second price: a man who does so, confesses that he has asked more than the just value of his goods. I fancy, too, that a *bargain* seldom answers; it is far from being economical to buy things the value of which is depreciated; and the remark of a friend of mine with regard to cheap goods, is just: "I cannot afford," says he, "to purchase them."

It is now time to take our hour's exercise before dinner: after recommending it so strongly to you, I must not myself lead you to think that I neglect to practise what I have approved in theory.

CONVERSATION III.

EVENING AT HOME, WITHOUT COMPANY,—CONVERSATION—
WORK—AMUSEMENT.—AT HOME, WITH COMPANY,—MUSIC
—DANCING—GAMES—CARDS—CHESS, ETC.—GENERAL
CONDUCT WHEN VISITING.

Mrs. L.—The manner in which I have seen some families pass their evenings at home, when they are not engaged with company, has often appeared to me to be dull, uninteresting, and frivolous. I have beheld the father, mother, and children, scarcely keeping up a languid conversation; one lounging in an easy chair; another turning over listlessly, the leaves of a magazine; and all yawning responsively, until the wished-for hour of bed arrived. If these people were to be seen only at such times, they

would be ranked in a very low scale of existence, appearing rather to vegetate than to live. But see them, again, the next evening in company, and you can hardly credit your senses, which show you the reverse of the family picture you had before contemplated. The father is, now, all intelligence and animation; the mother brilliant, and the daughters all smiles and good humour. Is there not something wrong in the habits of individuals who require such excitation to rouse into exertion their talents, social qualities, and, apparently, their powers of enjoyment?

Mrs. B.—In such a family party as you describe, the taste for rational pursuits has not been cultivated, so as to act as a counterbalance to the love of pleasure and variety, which is natural to youth. I am afraid that you will think I cast too heavy a censure on the wife and mother, when I accuse her of being the original cause of this defect among them. All the pursuits and arrangements of her family, *within* the house, are peculiarly under her jurisdiction: here she should direct and control, always, however, seeking the support and approbation of her measures from her husband, or yielding to his judgment, when he sees any reason to object rather than to approve. The case is very rare in which a woman does not possess sufficient power to govern her family; but not so rare is the abuse or the neglect of that power. The habits, pursuits, and inclinations of her husband are, generally, influenced by hers; her children are still more the subjects of her government: and, according as she regulates them, so, in all probability, will they grow up:—either listless, idle, self-indulgent, and indifferent to the comforts of others: or active in body, energetic in mind, and seeking pleasure in mental employment, and from gratifying others rather than themselves. Where the latter disposition prevails, you will not be liable to encounter dullness in a family circle; but rather gayety and animation, springing from ease,

freedom of thought, confidence in one another, and from a common interest in every topic of conversation.

The duties of each individual of which a family is composed, being, during the earlier part of the day duly performed, the evening should be open for rest or amusement. The consciousness of not having neglected any thing important, is in itself a pleasurable feeling, and gives a right to enjoy the amusement or repose which the close of the day may bring with it. Where there are young people, therefore, growing up, who form a part of the evening circle, it is, on their account, very desirable to render it cheerful and agreeable ; varying the amusements, and promoting conversation chiefly of an animated and cheering nature ; perhaps mingling with it, also, subjects and reflections of an improving kind, whenever they can be introduced in any easy and unrepelling manner. Home should, always, be the seat of innocent enjoyment to the young, counterpoising the influence over their morals which the pleasures of the world too readily obtain. A home presenting examples of virtue, and at the same time cherishing the happiness and promoting the comfort of every individual within its sphere, cannot fail to have a beneficial effect upon the unformed character of youth. Not only while under its immediate influence, but even when apparently withdrawn from it, will its traces be engraved on the remembrance, and assist towards effacing less harmless and pure impressions which other scenes may make. If such apparently trivial circumstances affect the welfare of a family, surely a mother will never abandon herself to any pursuits inconsistent with those which have so important an object in view. When her children are assembled around her for social intercourse, she will rouse herself to encourage and support lively and good-humoured conversation, or to promote every variety of simple amusement, which may serve as relaxations from study or business. The father, too, ought, without doubt,

to give his share of aid towards the general happiness of the family party; to banish from his countenance the anxious lines which the cares of the day may have traced upon it, and to enter into the amusements of the younger branches of his family, with as much sympathy as the difference of years between them and himself will allow.

Mrs. L.—Should not conversation form the chief amusement of the family evening party?

Mrs. B.—Certainly it should, and, therefore, to converse *well*, is an art of much value to women. It is the most certain means by which they may give a charm to social life; and by which they may banish dulness, the moment in which it attempts to intrude itself. No other talent or amusement has an equal power at all times: music may often fail to withdraw our thoughts from unpleasant remembrances; and the theatre, ball-room, and card-table, are not, always, in unison with the state of our feelings, which at times renders them irksome or indifferent to us. But it is not thus with conversation: which is scarcely ever so powerless as not to beguile the thoughts from even the most painful recollections; or to release them from that lethargic state in which they are sometimes confined. No one can prize too highly the privilege we possess, in this power of communicating and interchanging our ideas with those of our fellow-creatures. Conversation is, at once, the medium of affection, consolation, amusement, and instruction. It is the means by which wisdom may obtain an influence over weakness and folly; piety over irreligion and immorality. But how lamentable it is, that this blessing should ever be the instrument of evil! That thus gifted by our Creator, we should ever presume to speak of him with irreverence and ingratitude, or to tempt the unstable, by the language of levity and folly, to turn from the paths of wisdom! Women, in particular, upon whom devolves the charge of rising generations, and by whom the first impressions are made upon the human mind; who

have, also, generally considerable influence within their various spheres, should be cautious not to utter any sentiment, or to indulge in any conversation, inconsistent with virtue and piety. Not even the insignificance of the individual who could give utterance to irreverent sentiments, or who could scoff at things of serious import, would render him harmless in the society of the young, whose abhorrence of evil would be diminished by familiarity with its language.

Mrs. L.—You would not, I presume, exclude lively conversation, or banish from our circles those persons who have wit and humour?

Mrs. B.—It would be unnatural and also useless to desire such an exclusion; but is it not reasonable and essential to prohibit improper subjects from our conversation? Is there not range sufficient for the exercise of the greatest wit, or for the display of the liveliest humour, without touching either upon hallowed or licentious ground? Good taste, as well as good feeling, if permitted to mark out the boundary of conversation, will yet leave space enough for it to “flow like waters after summer showers.”

Mrs. L.—What do you think should be the chief characteristics in the conversation of women in general society?

Mrs. B.—To converse agreeably requires, in the first place, a cultivated mind, without which your conversation would be insipid to others; and you would have no interest and zest for an intercourse with sensible and well-informed people. Another requisite is to have well-governed feelings. These will enable you to preserve your own equanimity, and to avoid giving disturbance to that of others, whose opinions and prejudices are opposed to yours, or whose satire and ridicule deal hardly with you. Discrimination should also be included in the list of requisites, in order that we may discover what subjects, according to time and circumstances, we should choose or

avoid, and also the proper moment either to talk or to be silent. A monopolizer of conversation is, by no means, an agreeable appendage to a party, seldom amusing any one but herself: and, wrapped up in self-satisfaction, she forgets how unjust she is to the rest of the party, to whom conversation is common property, which each individual has a right to share whenever she chooses to claim it.

Mrs. L.—A great talker appears to me to forget that conversation has been compared to a game at ball, at which each player should urge the ball with spirit into its right direction, but never suffer it to rest with him beyond its proper time, or to fall to the ground when any dexterity and skill on his part can keep it in play.

Mrs. B.—The love of display is another trait very unfavourable to conversation, the chief objects of which are either instruction or amusement; and neither of these can be thoroughly attained, when this weakness betrays itself in the speaker. When amusement is the object in view, it can only be promoted by a general sympathy in the topics of conversation among the party, and this will not prevail, if the love of display govern the conversation of any one present. Women, more particularly than men, should beware of encouraging this defect in themselves. It tempts them, often, into subjects beyond their depth, and exposes them to ridicule much more frequently than it acquires admiration.

Mrs. L.—You think, then, that the improved state of a woman's mind, and the extent of her acquirements, ought rather to be *inferred* from the conversation, than forced and obtruded upon the observation of others?

Mrs. B.—Certainly; and I also think, that a well-informed woman cannot be mistaken for an ignorant person, although she may never be betrayed into any decided effort to display her knowledge: indeed, by being exempt from pedantry and self-sufficiency, she may even have credit given to her for more learning than she really pos-

esses, and thus, innocently and unconsciously, may impose on opinion. This the bold pretender to literary fame is for ever struggling to do, but in vain.

Mrs. L.—These remarks will, I think, apply as well to the conversation in family parties, as to that of more general society.

Mrs. B.—There are sometimes in family parties other defects than those which I have already mentioned, and which often render the intercourse less agreeable than it might be. These arise from the freedom enjoyed at home, which, though constituting one of the greatest charms of the domestic circle, yet may be, also, the bane of its comfort, if not properly directed and regulated. I have seen this freedom degenerate into rudeness, petulance, and a total disregard to the feelings of others. To satirize, without mercy, the failings and weaknesses which may prevail in a family circle, is also, not unfrequently, the chief amusement of some of its members. Ridicule is a weapon which, in domestic life, is seldom harmless, either to the person who wields it or to the individual against whom it is aimed. In the former it causes too keen a perception of the failings of our relatives, and in the latter it either occasions too great a dread of its power, or too great a callousness to it, according to the disposition of the attacked party. In all such cases, parental authority should check this abuse of a freedom, which, if it be not suffered to run riot, is one of the most attractive privileges of home. I remember to have heard the father of a large family boast, that he had never seen any quarrels among his children; and one of his daughters assured me of the truth of this assertion, acknowledging, at the same time, that a similar declaration could not have been made respecting them in the absence of their father. It would, indeed, have been an anomaly in the annals of domestic life, had all been tranquillity. But this lady also assured me, that the restraint which their father's presence imposed

upon them had, on the whole, a beneficial effect on their tempers and manners ;—and their unvaried gentleness of manner towards each other was generally remarked by their acquaintance, although it was without any unnatural or constrained appearance. She also believed, that in consequence of the unanimity that usually prevailed among them, and of the happiness which arose from it, their mutual affection was, in after-life, singularly strong, even in those members of the family, who, by marriage or other circumstances, were separated from the rest.

Needlework, reading aloud some amusing publication, or, occasionally, playing at chess and backgammon, may serve to give a pleasant variety to the evening's occupation of the different members of the family circle. Nothing delights the female part of a family so much as reading aloud some volume of interest by one of the party, whilst the others are employed in light or elegant needlework. In this manner a knowledge of polite literature may be acquired, without any sacrifice of more important duties. Even books of a deeper and more permanent character, which few have the taste or the inclination to pursue when alone, are often listened to with great pleasure and much profit, when read aloud in such a circle. I recollect, when visiting, at an early period of my life, in the family of Dr. —, a man of very domestic habits, although endowed with splendid talents and possessed of many scientific acquirements, hearing the Doctor read Milton's *Paradise Lost*, after tea, every evening, until the whole was completed. I had often, before, attempted to peruse this sublime poem, but always found it heavy and tedious. Under the circumstances, however, and from the manner in which it was read by the Doctor, I was surprised at finding in it numberless beauties and sublime passages, which had previously escaped my observation ; and, instead of considering it tedious or irksome to listen to it, the removal of the tea equipage, the stirring the fire, and

the hem, which were the signals that the reader was about to commence his agreeable task, awoke in me anticipations of the purest enjoyment. I shall never forget the smile of pleasure, which invariably played on the lovely countenances of his elegant daughters and their excellent mother, as they severally drew their chairs towards the table, and opening their workboxes, settled themselves to listen to the rich strain of poetry, which was enhanced by the clear, well-modulated tones, with which it was read by their father. No visit which I ever made afforded me so much satisfaction and pleasure.

Besides the information and gratification which listening to works thus read aloud afford to a family circle, this custom contributes, materially, to a never-failing flow of conversation, and sharpens our wit by the opportunities it offers of displaying our critical acuteness, both in pointing out the beauties and in detecting the defects of the work under perusal. It is a species of winter-evening employment which I strongly recommend you to encourage. And let it always be kept in mind, that idleness is fatal to good humour and cheerfulness; and, therefore, the vigilant wife and mother will ward off the demon that causes such evils to spring up, by every little art and inducement to engage the attention of all around her: unless, indeed, any of the party, having undergone great fatigue of mind and body during the day, require in the evening complete rest for both.

MRS. L.—When there is company at home, reading and working must give place to amusements of more general interest. Here, I suppose, you will tell me, musical skill in the lady of the house may be agreeably employed in giving entertainment to her guests, or in inducing others to join their powers to hers. Music and dancing for the younger, and chess or backgammon for the elder visitors, are the only amusements which seem to unite in one common interest a whole party.

Mrs. B.—Certainly; and however much these amusements may be censured by the *few*, as excluding conversation, they are undoubtedly suitable to the *many*, who, without them, would, in the midst of a party, be, as it were, shut up in themselves: some from notions of etiquette, and others from pride or timidity. But by throwing open the dancing-room, and preparing for amusements, these symptoms of coldness and formality vanish. All are at once free, easy, and sociable, mingling one with another in the quadrille, or cheerfully associating themselves at different games. No lady who wishes to see her guests smiling and pleased, will discard these amusements from her evening parties, although she may join in censuring the state of society which requires impressions on the senses to enliven it, and which would languish under the influence of amusement which depended wholly upon mental powers.

Mrs. L.—To observe and censure the manners of individuals in public, is the favourite amusement of some ladies; and young married women are, especially, considered as fair subjects for the study, and satiric remarks of these keen-eyed observers. Can any magic veil be found which shall protect me from these?

Mrs. B.—The best protection I can suggest is to act with propriety in public as well as elsewhere, which will render the remarks you dread undeserved. Acquire, also, the capability of bearing censure, especially if unmerited, with indifference, or at least with as little disturbance of mind as possible. To be too sensitive of blame is a great weakness; and it is yielding up our comfort to the mercy of others. Deserved censure is more difficult to endure than that which is unmerited; but in this case we should receive it patiently, and as an infliction which we have brought upon ourselves.

Impropriety of manner in company, though it does not bespeak a very correct mind, may be attendant on an

innocent one. A woman may have too much levity of manner ;—may laugh and talk too loud ;—give herself many fantastic airs ;—be too familiar with some of her acquaintance, and too haughty to others ; and yet she may mean nothing wrong to any one ; and, perhaps, her sole view may be to attract momentary notice, or to endeavour to render herself a person of consequence in the eyes of others. These are weak, but not criminal motives ; and yet they render her liable to derision, and to just censure, even from the lenient in judgment.

A venerable authoress, in one of her earliest publications, says, that propriety is to a woman what it has been said action is to an orator, the first, and second, and third essential : that propriety is the centre in which the lines of duty and amiability meet : and is to the character, what proportion is to the figure, and grace to the attitude. Propriety, thus characterized, is the union of every desirable quality in woman, by which her conduct and manners are influenced under every circumstance. Propriety never desires a deviation from any of the laws of good society, and neither seeks notice nor admiration, which, from their natures, would be incompatible with its own characteristics. Improper familiarities, haughtiness, intrusive forwardness to superiors, and insolence to inferiors ; the indulgence of any whim, by which our conduct to others may be influenced, are all equally unknown to propriety.

Unless a woman desire it, she seems but little called upon in public to bring herself and her actions into a prominent point of view, or to render herself a mark for sarcasm and ridicule. At home, when entertaining guests, she cannot pass altogether so unobtrusively, although the manners of the present period allow of more ease and latitude of deportment than formerly was deemed correct in a lady hostess, whose thoughts and time were condemned to the strictest attention to the comforts and pleasures of her visitors, often to the entire destruction of both.

Ease of manner in a woman is very pleasing, when the self-possession which gives it is unaccompanied by masculine courage, or by an undue value for herself. In general, the manners will be free from any painful degree of constraint, when the mind is not engaged upon *self*, or occupied with the idea of exciting attention and admiration from those around. Affectation has its origin from these sources; and this, besides being a symptom of a weak mind, is entirely destructive of good manners. Good sense and simplicity of manners are generally companions, forming a natural gentility, which is far preferable to any artificial politeness, inasmuch as the one is a part of the individual herself, and the other only a garb worn when occasion calls for it. However, those who possess this natural gentility may, by mixing in good society, have the additional polish given to it, which afterwards distinguishes it as the perfection of good manners.

MRS. L.—With the view of forming the manners of young people, would you bring them early into society?

MRS. B.—Certainly not until they have passed the age which ought to be chiefly devoted to study, and to the application essential to the acquisition of any accomplishment either mental or practical. Instruction will avail little if the thoughts are withdrawn from it by the attractions of dissipation, which even older people often find incompatible with strict attention to their duties, or to serious occupation; the effect upon the young and lively must be still greater, in rendering application irksome to them, and in diminishing their zeal and interest in the acquisition of knowledge.

The manners of young people will be insensibly formed during the progress of their education, and at this period of life, they will derive more advantage from the example afforded them, in the correct and amiable deportment of those among whom they live, than could be obtained from an occasional mixture in more general society. To hone

they should be indebted for the first impression of good manners;—to the world for the finishing touches only. The consequences of too early an initiation into the supposed delights of routs and balls are, often, an unfinished education, and from late hours, ruined health; sufficient evils to render parents cautious of yielding, when urged by the solicitations of their daughters, to introduce them early into those scenes of promised delight. Even when the proper season arrives for the indulgence of these natural wishes, moderation in their enjoyment should be strictly observed. This, a regard for health requires, and it is, also, a precaution, by which the zest for such pleasures may be kept alive. Satiety is the mortal foe to enjoyment.

On the score of appearances, too, it is by no means desirable for young people to frequent too commonly the haunts of pleasure. It might lead to an unfavourable inference alike as to the inclination and power of a young lady to discharge the obligations of a wife or a mother, and thus obscure her prospects of engaging the notice and approbation of the sensible and reflecting part of the other sex. This remark must be perfectly familiar to the prudent and wary mother, as well as the truism, that what we behold every day we regard with indifference, or rarely notice. Scarce and choice plants the florist covets, and not the flowers that are common to his soil and country, and of which he may easily obtain possession.

I do not think that even the manners of a young person are improved by too great a familiarity with the world. It gives a hardness to them, marking the features of the face with symptoms of effrontery, and the whole person with an undaunted air, resulting from self-complacency. All this may be considered by some as fashionable ease of manner; but, certainly, the *tout ensemble* is far from interesting or graceful.

Not only appearances, but the comfort of a young lady

in public, depends upon her having an unexceptionable escort or *chaperon*, to whom she may have recourse upon any dilemma, and whose experience and greater knowledge of the world may be useful to her in assisting her out of her difficulties. Her mother is, of course, the best escort she can have ; but if circumstances prevent her from accompanying her daughter, a near relation or an intimate friend should supply her place. A young woman venturing into public without a proper *chaperon* is a thing scarcely known ; and, indeed, without such a sanction, she would be shunned by the circumspect part of her own sex, and, perhaps, too much noticed by the amusement seekers of the other.

And now, good morning : to-morrow we will renew our conversation.

CONVERSATION IV.

ON THE DANGER AND DISAPPOINTMENT ATTENDING A MERELY PURSUIT OF PLEASURE.—THE OPPOSITE EXTREME TO BE ALSO AVOIDED.—THE CLAIMS OF SOCIETY MAY BE IN GENERAL ATTENDED TO WITHOUT INFRINGEMENT OF HIGHER DUTIES.

Mrs. B.—There are two extremes of conduct observable in women, either of which the wise and discreet among us will desire to avoid : the one, because it is marked by impropriety, and attended with danger to the character, and with chagrin and disappointment in the hopes of enjoyment : the other, because, although less hazardous, it has effects of an unamiable tendency on the temper and disposition. Although any one who pursue

the latter course may fancy that she fulfils her duty within her house, yet she falls short in the performance of that from which, as a member of society, she cannot be exempted.

The first extreme of conduct to which I allude, is the immoderate love and pursuit of pleasure, or rather, of those amusements by which the senses, chiefly, are gratified. And let me here remark, that I am not going, with ascetic strictness, to condemn amusement altogether; for, without the aid of the philosopher, we may easily perceive that what has been benevolently designed by our Creator to afford us gratification we may innocently enjoy, provided we keep within the limits of moderation. Thus, when we are hungry, to eat is pleasant; but if we do more than satisfy the appetite, we may lay the foundation of disease and pain. Exercise is a gratification to the vigorous and healthy, but fatigue and weakness follow its excess. Excess produces either satiety or pain. And as this is a law annexed to every pleasure, the true Epicurean will ever bear for his motto, "Enjoy with moderation." The fact that pain and sorrow result from our abuse of blessings, conveys to us a command which we ought implicitly to obey.

Mrs. L.—It is strange, that rational beings, who have all the same object to attain (I mean happiness), should pursue such various paths to it. Some must inevitably be wrong. It appears to me that all are in an error who seek present enjoyment instead of future good.

Mrs. B.—I should rather say, that our present enjoyment depends upon the rational pursuit of good: and that we are called upon to sacrifice no present inclinations or wishes except those which are opposed to our future welfare. So it is with the innocent pleasures of life: we are not required to deny ourselves the moderate indulgence in them, because that indulgence need not prevent the fulfilment of our duties, injure our healths, or tempt us to an

extravagant expenditure of income. On the contrary, it will often give a rest to the mind; and prepare it to resume with renewed diligence every important avocation. Varied scenes and amusements, too, are sometimes beneficial to the invalid, checking his inclination to dwell on trifling symptoms, and promoting cheerfulness, the friend and companion of health.

Who can call it a crime to enjoy, even to rapture, the music which our groves and fields provide for us? Who can discover a reason why we should not relish the perfume of the rose, or delight in the varied and lovely scenes of nature? These pleasures are provided for us, unsought for; and when for a season they are withdrawn from us, or their attractions are diminished, who can deny the effect? Does not their restoration renew our pleasures, and enhance their charms?

If such beneficent provision for our gratification has been made in the natural world, may we not infer, that an equal share has been designed for us in the moral world? And in opposition to the monkish austerity of past ages, or to the religious zeal of the present, may we not claim a right to participate in every social amusement that involves no breach of duty, tends to corrupt no right principle, or to injure, in any way, either ourselves or others? When our social pleasures and amusements are thus regulated and governed, I think we may believe, and act upon this belief, that "To enjoy is to obey."

Let us now inquire what are the general effects of a mere life of pleasure, when pursued by a wife or a mother, unrestrained by a sufficient regard to her duties.

The keenest votaries of dissipation are often those whose minds, when they first commenced their career, were framed for true enjoyment; but, unluckily, mistaking the road to it, they have pursued that which led to spurious pleasures only, and which their haggard bodies and worn-out spirits too plainly evince. In a very few

Years, they are often beheld as the wrecks of what they were, both in mind and person. The finest and most highly polished steel more easily corrodes than a baser metal; and if the rust remain unheeded, it eats deeply in and spoils the whole. Of this there have been in fashionable life many notorious exemplifications. Women of the highest attainments and of the finest dispositions have become contemptible and miserable; the latter end of their lives pitiable, and their death-beds awful warnings to unreflecting survivors, from having put no restraint over their inclinations for amusement, until it has become inordinate and uncontrollable.

In arriving at this state of degradation, they have abandoned without a moment's thought, every duty to which by their situation in society they were destined. To the welfare of their husbands and children they have shown a total indifference, and have selfishly squandered away wealth, even to ruin. Had we had the means of following any of these instances through their whole course, in private as well as in public, of penetrating into their thoughts, and examining the varied feelings of their hearts, we should, I am persuaded, have been struck with amazement, at discovering how small a portion of enjoyment they had realized. While pursuing some supposed delight, we should have found them in a feverish state of excitement, brooking with ill humour any opposition to their views which they might encounter, and cherishing any unamiable or unlawful feelings to which an unworthy pursuit would give rise. And when this fever within them had subsided, we should have been sensible of the havoc it had caused by the discontented countenance, the joyless and languid air, the dispirited mind and fretful behaviour. Compare this state of feeling with that which accompanies and rewards the accomplishment of any virtuous and benevolent scheme, or which attends the sacrifice of inclination to duty: what enviable sensations beam in the face, and what

cheerfulness in the manner! The comparison must lead you to acknowledge, that the path of dissipation is also that of folly, and one which will not conduct to happiness.

We will suppose a woman circumstanced as yourself, commencing, but more thoughtlessly, her new career, and, probably, regarding her marriage as an epoch from which to date her emancipation from the restraints which parental authority may, perhaps, have seen fit to impose, or which the rules of society prescribe for the government of woman's single state. If such are her feelings, she will reject the idea that she has at the altar imposed on herself new obligations; and, without regard to her husband's circumstances or prospects, it is probable she will follow the bent of her inclinations, instead of the dictates of duty and principle. If, unfortunately, she is yoked to as unreflecting a mortal as herself, or to one who pursues his own plans of amusement, unconnected with hers, there is then but little chance of her turning away from the alluring but deceitful paths of dissipation, before every other course has lost its power to attract her. To vary her pleasures and her dress will be the business of her life; and as these are not inclinations which can be indulged without considerable expense, it is probable that she soon finds herself in pecuniary difficulties, from which her husband may not have the power, or, as in some instances, not the inclination, to relieve her. Supposing this to be the case, the first moment of her difficulties you may mark as the commencement of that state of degradation which ends in a total corruption of the heart. Every thought that might rouse reflection, and lead to strengthen the principle of right implanted within her breast, is banished, and she is reduced to base expedients to avert the inconveniences which folly has occasioned her. Disingenuousness towards her husband is the first consequence, and this practice must be painful indeed to a mind hitherto upright. Meanness and faithlessness mark her conduct to those with whom she is

involved in pecuniary debts, while a selfish indulgence of all her extravagant propensities grows each day in strength, and urges her on to still greater improprieties, until it end in the overthrow of every virtuous principle within her.

The state of her mind at this juncture, could it be pictured, would be a mournful illustration of her degradation, and of the chagrin and disappointment to which she is a prey. The generous and disinterested affections of her heart have been gradually supplanted by malignant dispositions and selfishness. She is perpetually gnawed by envy at the supposed happiness, the greater personal attractions, or the superior estimation in society of others; while remorse reminds her ever, that she is, herself, the author of every trouble of which she complains; and that, once, she had within her power the choice of good or evil, and that she, then, suffered folly to hold the scales, and to determine her election.

Although incapable of feeling now for others, she is keenly alive to what affects herself. She repines at the neglect and indifference she experiences from her husband, and at the want of affection towards her in her children, yet acknowledging she has sacrificed nothing for them; that to her they are indebted for no care in infancy, nor for instruction or example in their riper years. Now they are in their turn deficient in duty; and though their conduct may fill her with anguish, she can scarcely claim a right to complain. Perhaps her health is undermined; late hours, with spirits constantly over-excited, having assisted to exhaust her frame. Her existence may not be long protracted, and she will pass from this stage to another unlamented; and having left behind her no memorial of good, the remembrance of all relating personally to her will fade away, long before her remains are mouldered and mingled with the dust. Suppose her to be permitted to enter the vale of years; long life would be to

her only a prolongation of misery. Old age brings evils to the good as well as to the bad ; but the former finds an antidote in the reminiscence of a well spent life, and in the cheering hopes and prospects of futurity. But the latter can draw no such solace. Moral evils she has herself added to those to which, as flesh, she is heir ; and, therefore, her continuance in life must be joyless and undesirable. If she look back, she beholds almost a desolate waste ; few virtuous resolutions made, and still fewer virtuous actions performed ; if she look forward, her view is gloomy, and portentous.

Those who remember the history of the celebrated Duchess of —, will remark, in it, an illustration of the picture I have attempted to draw. Married early in life, and to a man to whom ambition, not affection, united her, that distinguished comet in the sphere of fashion ran a course marked by notoriety, and by the luxuriance of pleasure, but not of happiness. She set out, in her career, with a resolution to be the first object of attention in the gay world, and distinction was her being's end, object, aim. Nor would this have been reprehensible, had the eminence to which she aspired been attainable only by virtuous actions, or by the exercise of intellectual endowments ; unhappily the prize she coveted was open to the frivolous, the dissipated, and the vain. If we may judge of the importance of a race, by the competitors who engage in it, what shall we say of the candidate for fashionable celebrity, which is the most readily gained by the most ridiculous and contemptible of mankind ? The lady to whom I allude could not be ranked among either of these classes, if her mental powers be considered : Providence had blessed her with strong sense, and with a quick and acute perception ; and education had improved these advantages into all that could delight in society, and give variety to retirement. But pursuing every species of excitement (falsely called pleasure) with an avidity that left

no time for continued improvement, after she became her own mistress, the wit of this ill-judging woman was sullied by effrontery and coarseness, her imagination perverted by eccentricity, and her judgment impaired by want of exertion, and warped by passion. As in her calculations of the happiness a ducal coronet might impart, she had not included the comforts of domestic life, she paid so little attention to the disposition and happiness of her husband, that although they ought to have been united by those ties which a numerous offspring usually occasion, they were estranged and lived separate ; she, continuing her progress to the heights of fashionable honours, and he, sinking from his station, his duties to society and to himself, into all the degradation of low profligacy, and of debased and debasing company.

We cannot suppose that a being, endowed with the capability of reflection, could long lead such a course as that of the Duchess of —, without experimentally finding its actual insipidity, nay, wretchedness. That she did even acknowledge her conviction of this, has been asserted by her acquaintance ; and long after she had ceased to enjoy the species of disreputable fame which her follies and excesses had procured her in the gay world, she remained in it, perhaps from not knowing what alternative to choose, perhaps from habit, or more probably from the desire of gratifying a favourite project, that of marrying her daughters in a station as elevated as her own. Nor was it till this darling object was secured, and till no other stimulus remained to her, that she saw the worthlessness of all that she had attained, and the value of all that she had rejected. In the close of life, she acknowledged with penitence her misapplication of talents, her worse than profusion, her abuse of the gifts of fortune, her neglect of all important duties, her eagerness in following vain, and even criminal enjoyments ; and to a clergyman to whom, on her deathbed, she imparted those feelings, which were

soon to be reviewed before a far more awful tribunal, she confessed her errors and her disappointments ; and acknowledged that one conviction, from the experience of a long life, alone remained impressed upon her mind,—that all the enjoyments that the most complete state of luxury and of dissipation can impart are totally incapable of affording one hour's solid gratification ; and that upon review they are, compared with neglected duties, as the stings of a serpent, which are not the less replete with venom although the danger be concealed amidst a bed of flowers.

We will turn from this lamentable picture, to inquire whether the opposite extreme of conduct ought not, also, to be avoided, by which I mean the abandonment of a woman to household concerns, and to the over-solicitous care of her children, involving her in an entire neglect of the duties connected with social life and good neighbourhood.

MRS. L.—Does not the situation of many ladies require this devotion of themselves ? Some are in narrow circumstances, and not able to provide sufficient assistance either for their household work, or in their nurseries ; and have apparently no alternative but to neglect their children, or to give up their own time and thoughts to them. Others, from delicate health, are unable both to discharge their duty to their families, and to attend to the calls of society.

MRS. B.—Of course general observations are not always applicable to particular cases, and often what is incumbent on one individual would be wrong or needless in another.

I have in my recollection an instance which may, perhaps, exemplify the error in conduct of which I am speaking.

Mrs. C——, in whose neighbourhood I lived in my youth, considered herself as a pattern of wives and mothers, making it her boast that she combined the good

housewifery of former times to the maternal care and attention for which the present age of mothers is remarkable. Her husband was a man of property; but, if rendering him happy in his home, and respectable in the eyes of his neighbours (as far as depends on a wife), should form some part of a good wife's care, she, certainly, did not sustain the character. Considering the extent of her husband's property, her economy approached to meanness. Her table was always so scantily provided, and such strict limitation of every article throughout her establishment was enforced, that poverty seemed an inmate, while comfort was banished from her house. For the *glory* of being accounted a thrifty manager, she submitted, and obliged others to submit, to many privations; and, often, she was obliged to share the labours of her household, which she preferred to the expense of keeping a proper complement of servants. At no period of the day, which was shared between household and nursery cares, could her husband promise himself her society, and, in the evenings, he generally found her wearied and fretted by the petty concerns of her life. For visiting or receiving company she constantly declared she had no time; and, indeed, she at length acquired a disrelish for any society which was not comprised within her narrow scene of action.

A life of retirement soon renders us unfit and unwilling to mingle in general society. The exertion both of mind and body in which company engages us, we seldom think compensated by the degree of pleasure we receive from it, when, from seclusion, we have lost our relish for topics of general interest. Our thoughts and feelings are too much wrapped up in our own concerns, and we become devoid of that sympathy in the tastes, feelings, and concerns of others, which gives the chief interest to our intercourse with our fellow-creatures. Natural obstacles, a sea flowing, or mountains intervening between friends, are not more effectual barriers to the interchange of ideas and

feelings, than the want of sympathy and common interest in each other's welfare.

The unenvied husband of this *good wife* sought amusement any where but at home. He spent much of his time either in field sports, or in the more dangerous pleasures of the turf and the gaming-table. His wife's confined view of her duties prevented her from anticipating this effect of her management; nor, indeed, did she ever imagine herself as in any way the author of her husband's failings. Her children, also, both mentally and physically, were sufferers. Her imagination, not allowed to range beyond her domestic circle, fed itself upon the supposed diseases of her children, which, I believe I may justly assert, were more often engendered in their constitutions, than averted, by the measures and precautions which her over-solicitude prompted. Their tempers were injured by injudicious indulgence at one time, and by the fretfulness which her cares induced, and which she could not always restrain, even towards the objects of those cares. Her servants, too, were not among the happiest of her family; her principle in regard to them being, that they ought to belong to a "much-enduring race," to work hard and fare hard.

What effect this lady's character might have had upon her offspring cannot now be known, as consumption rapidly terminated her life. It was the opinion of her physician that this disease had met with encouragement from the restless anxiety of her mind, and the frequent over-exertion of her strength. Her death occasioned but little feeling in her neighbourhood: few tears were shed, few regrets expressed, for one who had made no attempts to attach others to her, or to perform any of the kindly offices of good neighbourhood. Her equals lost no friend when she expired; the poor no benefactress.

There are many ladies who, though they do not carry their conduct to the extreme which I have just described,

yet, in a degree, err in a similar manner, and suffer their minds to be too much engrossed with similar cares. They build a wall around them, and confine within it their ideas, prospects, hopes, and expectations, and can imagine no happiness nor good to spring beyond it.

I hope I have exposed with sufficient force, the danger and inconveniences which arise from either of the extremes in conduct, which I have attempted to describe. Instances still more lamentable might have been adduced, but as I trust they have generally been peculiar cases, connected with a strange perversity of disposition, their examples need not be instanced to those in whom no such depravity exists. If I have prepossessed you in favour of a middle course, I shall be contented. Society has various claims upon us, and these may in most cases be satisfied without any omission or neglect of higher demands upon our time and attention. To economise time, to avoid frittering away any great portion of it on trifles, or with listless indifference to suffer it to pass away unemployed; to perform strictly the duties of each day, so that no occasional pressure of employment may hurry you into a hasty and careless method of proceeding;—these will be the best means of insuring you time for the demands which may be made upon you by society in general.

I have already instanced our mutual friend Maria, as an example worthy of imitation in the disposition of her time, both in the performance of her duties, and in the continued cultivation of her talents. Nor is her character incomplete in regard to the minor circumstances which attend her situation in society. From the profession of her husband, it is, perhaps, more important in her case than it would be in that of another, to maintain a larger circle of acquaintance, and in this she displays the same judgment as in other points of conduct. She does neither more nor less than what is necessary: she is not for ever to be seen in parties or in public; but she never absents herself from

them until she is forgotten. The parties at her own house, though not frequent, answer the end in view. With a select circle of friends, she maintains a more constant intercourse, and to be included in this circle is at once a pleasure and a privilege. No member of it has ever required an act of friendship from her, which she has not cheerfully performed. In their time of sickness and distress she has been ever ready to comfort or to aid them.

In most of the charitable institutions the time bestowed by an individual is, often, as essential in promoting the good for which they are established as pecuniary donations: disinterested personal exertions may be called the soul of public charities, by superintending the formation of judicious regulations for their government, and by seeing such regulations enforced and maintained. Under peculiar circumstances only, or from ill health, should any woman grudge some personal inconvenience, and a sacrifice of some portion of her time, to ensure the good which these establishments are designed to provide for the various unfortunate members of our community. Age, indeed, and very narrow circumstances, may require exemption from these personal exertions; but in youth, in health, and in the day of prosperity, may active and judicious benevolence ever be among the most distinguished characteristics of English women! Notwithstanding the censures which the political economist may cast upon them, they will have a recompense within their own breasts, far exceeding mere public approbation.

PART IV.

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS DUTIES.

CONVERSATION I.

PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT.—THEIR IMPORTANCE AND INFLUENCE IN THE DOMESTIC CIRCLE.—SINCERITY.—MANŒUVRING, PRIDE, AND VANITY.—PROPRIETY IN CONDUCT.—THE FEMALE CHARACTER IS IRREPARABLY INJURED, WHEN SUSPICION HAS BEEN ONCE ATTACHED TO IT.—RESIGNATION.—FORTITUDE UNDER MISFORTUNES.—WIDOWHOOD.—OLD AGE.—MAKING A WILL

Mrs. B.—The propriety of pursuing the great principles of religious and moral duty is obvious to all perceptions, whether we regard, with limited view our welfare in this world, or embrace that which extends itself to eternity. Virtuous principles are laws for our moral government, and when fixed on the basis of virtuous habits, are scarcely to be broken. They are the reins by which our passions may be controlled ; supplied with such restraints, we prove ourselves superior to those temptations, by which, in the journey of life, we are assailed : without them, we should excel in no virtue ; but these being once established in our hearts and minds, we feel almost independent of extrinsic advantages ; our conduct is uniformly influenced by them, and we walk through life

with dignity, even if below mediocrity in talents, rank, and fortune. They entitle us to an esteem and homage from our fellow-creatures, far superior in kind to that which these gifts alone could procure us.

A mind, even if it be not naturally vigorous, may receive from the aid of good principles the strength which nature has denied to it, and may be enabled to act with judgment and decision on every point which can be balanced in the scales of right and wrong. It is true, that in mere matters of opinion, or in some immaterial parts of conduct, a defective judgment will still display itself; but if its decision be right in essential things, we must acknowledge that good principles of conduct perform their part almost independent of mental powers, while he, to whom superior talents have been given, can neither lay claim to an equal degree of wisdom, nor merit equal happiness, unless he have submitted his judgment and conduct to the same laws and government.

Mrs. L.—By good principles, I conclude you mean a settled tendency in the mind to act in a manner most consistent to the true dignity of our natures, and which is also to act conformably to the will of God. These principles, though important to man, appear to me to be still more essential to woman, although both, perhaps, have equal temptations to err. But man is less obedient to momentary impulses than woman; he is more prudent, ponders before he acts, examines into the expediency of the steps he is about to take, and if right principles do not sway him, his judgment will sometimes induce him to abandon injurious designs, and to adopt a discreet and honourable conduct, as best conducive to his interests. While woman, too lively and ungovernable in her feelings, hasty in her conclusions, shortsighted in her views, and sometimes unreasonable in her wishes, would be lost without the guiding and restraining influence of virtuous principles.

Mrs. B.—They do indeed shelter and defend her from the dangers to which she is, from her very nature and weaknesses, exposed. And besides this defence, they give her the best kind of influence she can possess over the minds and affections of those around her, enabling her, more by the beauty of her example than by her precepts, to promote their moral welfare.

Mrs. L.—I heard some time since a discussion between two sensible women, whether habits are founded upon principles, or principles upon habits : an inquiry not uninteresting to those who are called upon to implant the basis of right conduct upon a rising generation.

Mrs. B.—The general practice is in favour of the latter opinion ; and upon very uncertain grounds would a parent endeavour to bring up her children virtuously, if she did not commence her task with the formation of their habits. Habit, when once established, cannot be broken without an effort ; and she therefore avails herself of it in the cultivation of the moral character of her children, trusting that the love of right will be built upon its practice. Thus, she will punish falsehood in her child, not for its present effects, which may be trivial, but to check an evil propensity ; she commends his honest confession of a fault, to encourage ingenuousness ; and she reproves a gust of passion, not because the little uplifted arm conveys destruction in its blow, but from the dread that habit will give strength to the rage which now raises it, and will render its deeds, at some future day, far more guilty. She teaches her children to lisp an early prayer, not from the idea of any present benefit which their hearts can derive from the practice, but because she regards it as one means of establishing in them habitual devotion, and of rendering them unconscious of a time in their existence, in which their days were not begun and ended in acts of homage to their Creator. She obeys the injunction in the Book of Wisdom, *to train them up in the way they should go*, in the fervent

and well-grounded hope, that *when they are old they will not depart from it.*

In our various conversations, we have been led to perceive the influence which women possess over the welfare and happiness of society. Individually the extent of our power is limited, but collectively we hold in our hands the happiness or misery of living multitudes, and even of unborn generations, our children handing down to theirs the virtues or defects which we have cherished or engendered in them. The sphere of duty assigned to women, considered singly, is limited to one family and to one circle in society; but the effects of the fulfilment or neglect of those duties are extended almost beyond belief. Perhaps this lengthened view may make but little impression on our minds, prone as we are to be more affected by present than by future consequences, but still it must be a source of pleasing reflection to the zealous in well-doing, that the virtuous influence they enjoy in their day and generation, will carry down to their posterity a portion of its beneficial effects.

To improve the present time, however, must be the object of our present care and attention, and we must first obtain the necessary influence by the constant and vigilant cultivation of virtue, and by the subduing of every unamiable and unwarrantable propensity, before we can reap the reward of self-satisfaction, or indulge the benevolent hope that the good seed which we have sown will flourish abundantly.

The most important consideration of the married woman, is the discharge of her duty as a wife. The precise nature of that duty must vary according to the circumstances of each individual, but in all the chief points there can be no difference. Sincerity, unbroken confidence, a modest propriety of deportment, discretion, and prudence in the management of domestic concerns, with a well-governed temper, are qualities that ought invariably to adorn the

character of a wife ; let her add to these, amiable manners, an affectionate disposition, and her character will not only obtain esteem, but influence.

It is not easy to number in how many ways such a wife may benefit the mind and habits of her husband. He may, unhappily, be devoid of religious principles ; he may be addicted to some vice ; may be intemperate in his habits, and licentious in his conversation ; he may have a turn for extravagance and expense, inconsistent with his fortune. It would be a difficult and hazardous attempt for a friend, or even for a near relation, to undertake a reformation in him of any of these defects, but the judicious exertion of his wife's influence may produce an amendment, which would be considered as a miracle if effected by any other hand. Yet it must be remembered, that this good work cannot be performed by one who is herself defective in principle and conduct. He who doubts the sincerity of his wife, or who sees impropriety in her manners, and suffers from her ill-regulated mind, will believe that her religion is a mask which she wears to procure for her a fair appearance to the world, but which in his mind only increases her mental deformity. The characteristics of true religion are, purity of life, uprightness of mind, and benevolence of heart. While in these qualities we need ourselves a monitor, we can attempt no radical reformation in others.

Nor is the example we present to our children and servants a matter of no moment, as many imagine, who depend upon the youth and inexperience of the one, for security from a troublesome observation of their conduct, and upon the dependant rank of the other, to blind them to their vices and defects. These expectations will assuredly be disappointed. Children are keen-sighted, and, with retentive memory, treasure up their observations ; from which will result disobedience and contempt of reproof from parents whose conduct they do not esteem.

If obedience be obtained from children, after they have ceased to respect their parents, it is most probably the offspring of fear, and will not exist beyond the period of childhood. When the parent can no longer inflict punishment, apprehension will pass away, and leave no principle or affection to supply its place. Fear is a base passion, when unmixed with affection towards the object exciting it; and though the virtuous parent finds occasion to employ it more or less among his children, he never allows it to be their only feeling towards him, but secures its union in their minds, with such a portion of filial affection and reverence, as to deprive it of every ignoble tendency, and to convert it into an essential instrument of their moral culture.

If failings are not secure from the observation of children, they are still less hidden from the notice of servants, who are generally more intent in watching the conduct of their superiors, than in regulating their own. They can easily distinguish between virtue and vice; and, according as they habitually behold the one or the other, will the bias be given to their own characters. Not that a vicious servant is likely to be reclaimed by merely beholding virtue in his superiors, although it may diminish the tendency to evil in him. Unfortunately, however, it is more easy to do harm by a bad example than to effect good by a virtuous one, and much sooner could we turn any one from uprightness and purity of life, than restore him to his previous state of innocence, which, indeed, might be for ever impossible.

Natural affection for our offspring, prompting us to do them every possible good in this world, as well as to promote their happiness in a future life, is a strong inducement to us to set forth in our lives, a copy worthy of their imitation; and, in regard to our dependants, our duty to God, every principle of morality, and every benevolent feeling of our hearts, speak as imperious a command to our

reason, to guard our lives and conversation from every irregularity and tendency, which might, by the force of example, tempt them to deviate from their obedience, both to the laws of God and of man.

Besides all these important motives to virtue, which belong in common to us as wives, parents, and mistresses, may be added the desire to maintain an irreproachable name in society; a wish neither unnatural nor unworthy, but which those witnesses of our conduct who dwell within our walls may render abortive, if we, by an impeachable deportment, place ourselves within their power. The ignoble in mind are eager to reduce their superiors nearer to their own level, and from their failings are willing to extract, if they can, an apology for their own. When they dare not openly censure, or express their contempt by insolence of manner, they give themselves latitude in the luxury of backbiting, and their reports often gain a ready credit, from their supposed acquaintance with the private scenes in the lives of their employers. From such a source every communication should be met with qualifications adequate to the causes which mislead their judgment, or which induce them to indulge in misrepresentations; but for these misrepresentations there is only one sure exemption, the uniform practice of virtue. - This will render us fearless of scrutiny, and unsuspicious of slander.

Mrs. L.—What do you consider to be the chief failings of women? To vice in an aggravated degree, it can scarcely be said they are addicted, although there may be instances of it, in almost every rank of society; still, that it is not common among us is, I think, evident from the abhorrence generally felt and expressed towards any of the unhappy and pitiable victims to evil propensities; and, also, from the disrepute which attaches itself, not only to the individuals themselves, but to every one connected with them.

Mrs. B.—The failings of women, though they may

seriously affect the happiness of their family connections, as we have before agreed, are, like their virtues, unobtrusive on general notice : and, when observed, are treated sometimes leniently, from the truth, which our self-knowledge compels us to admit, that "to err is human." The characteristic endowments of women, are not of a commanding and imposing nature, such as man may boast of, and which enable him to contend with difficulties and dangers, to which, both personally and mentally, he is liable. The perfection of the female character is attained by the cultivation of endowments completely opposed to these, but equally suited to the nature of their duties. They consist in purity of mind, simplicity and frankness of heart, benevolence, prompting to active charity, lively and warm affections, inducing a habit of forbearance, and the practice of self-denial, which the comfort or good of their human ties may demand. These, when confirmed and supported by a devout spirit towards God, give a mild but steady lustre to female existence, equally adorning it in the character of daughter, wife, or mother. But when these gifts of nature remain uncultivated, or are improperly directed by any unfavourable circumstances in early life, we must expect to find them degenerated into weaknesses, or to have given place to their opposite defects : simplicity and frankness changed into cunning ; benevolence crushed into selfishness, or exercised without discretion and judgment ; irritability of temper instead of meekness and forbearance, and a stronger inclination to gratify self than to consult the wishes and the feelings of others ; in morality no steadiness, expediency governing rather than sincerity of heart and integrity of mind ; and in religion, either enthusiasm or coldness and indifference. Let us enter more minutely, both into the examination of some of those qualities which we should sedulously cultivate, and of others which we should as carefully subdue.

Sincerity, as the only solid ground upon which all other

virtues can rest, stands foremost for our examination. At present, we will only regard it as it concerns ourselves and others, and will defer for a subsequent consideration, its serious importance in the conduct of our feelings towards God.

Sincerity is composed of simplicity of intention, and of truth in thought and word. A woman truly sincere will say neither more nor less than she means and thinks ; she is undesigning, and therefore has no cause to mislead by her words ; and though her prudence may sometimes restrain her speech, it never urges her to the practice of dissimulation. Sincerity is essential to our comfort in all our earthly connexions ; without it there can be no reliance or confidence, no safety ; nor can there be any certainty that other virtues have a firm footing in those who are evidently devoid of sincerity. Insincerity is the poison of every good quality and feeling, and can serve as nourishment only to base and unworthy desires. There are many causes which conspire to render duplicity not an uncommon failing in women. A sense of weakness, timidity of disposition, and a defective judgment, often lead them to employ a subterfuge rather than open dealing, in the attainment of any petty wishes and objects. Some of the usages of society have also a dissimulating tendency, and they who aspire to the reputation of politeness, not unfrequently practise, to its utmost extent, this licensed dissimulation, although forfeiting the higher claim to sincerity. Such characters do no good to themselves, and, fortunately, but little harm to others ; they gain no credit for their professions of friendship or good will, nor secure to themselves any friendship more sincere than that which they profess ; for who can value or attach themselves truly to those whom they believe to be hollow in heart, and to whom they apply the epithet of "people of the world?"

The love of praise, natural as it is, and often an instrument of good in us, may, if wrongfully applied, lead us

to counterfeit goodness, rather than to acquire its reality. The reputation thus obtained is an insecure possession, which may, after labouring in artifice for years, be destroyed by the exposure of a single moment.

If it be worth while to appear to be amiable and good, how infinitely preferable is it to be really so? To practise dissimulation is like passing bad coin; the counterfeit may be undiscovered for a season, and during that time, procure for us certain advantages, but the possession of these will be imbittered by the dread of discovery, which sooner or later must happen, and entail on us inconveniences never, perhaps, to be overcome; suspicion, however false, will attach itself to our future conduct; truth will obtain for us no credit, integrity no confidence. If, on a single occasion in our lives, we have been tempted to depart from veracity, we shall need no assurance of the misery and anxiety arising from it. To a mind unused to the practice of deceit, the consciousness of such a deviation from rectitude is punishment enough; but besides this, it is ever haunted by tormenting fears of exposure, which it too often seeks to avoid, by adopting expedients, which, at another time, it would have spurned as base and disgraceful. With regret is the truth perceived and acknowledged, that it requires a thousand artifices to avert the inconveniences of one.

Mrs. L.—Manœuvring, which has been so ably described in the character of Mrs. Beaumont, by Miss Edgeworth, is a species of double dealing practised by many, who would be horror-struck if they imagined their conduct might be construed into artfulness; and, indeed, when one recollects how plainly these little arts are seen through, one is more ready to accuse them of a simplicity only excelled by the ostrich, which fancies itself hidden from its pursuers, if it thrust its head in the midst of a thicket.

Mrs. B.—Cunning, joined to a sense of weakness, I believe to be the cause of this defect, which is generally

at work to obtain petty ends. The manœuvrer has a few mental reservations, with which she silences the whisperings of her conscience. She satisfies herself that she is not to be reproached while she refrains from direct falsehood, but allows herself freely to colour, as may suit her purpose, all her representations. If she really deludes, is she less censurable than he who plainly asserts what is false? Both have the same end in view,—to deceive.

MRS. L.—I have heard of a lady, whose indulgence of this habit had become so notorious, that no one ever heard her express a sentiment without searching into her supposed hidden meaning, none doubting that the one which was obvious was not the real one, and that some design was attached to it that might concern themselves. This was often true with regard to those whose conduct she wished to influence and direct to some particular end. In one event, however, she was curiously misinterpreted. Not liking to avow her disinclination to a marriage which her daughter wished to form, she thought to prevent it by the introduction of an under-plot; and trusting it would bring about a mutual disagreement between the parties, she did not by word or action discountenance the attachment, but suffered the young people to commit her to all their friends as sanctioning the connexion. The plot failed, but not until it was too late for her to recede with any kind of credit. Her ungoverned anger when she found her scheme thwarted, betrayed to her thunder-struck daughter the real state of the case, who, however, feeling that her mother's estimation among her friends (as well as her own happiness) depended upon her apparent consistency, determined to brook the storm, and to pursue her course steadily, in ratifying her union, choosing, as the least evil among many, to leave her mother to smother her vexation, and to console herself for her disappointment as well as she was able.

MRS. B.—Similar mistakes in such a system of

management will occur to the ablest manœuvrer, but these are not the least inconveniences that may arise. To say nothing of the loss of the esteem and confidence of all who are aware of her foible, an injurious effect is caused to her own mind, for which no occasional success can compensate. She who is habitually deluding others, will end in deceiving herself. The crooked policy she pursues, and the sophistry which she employs in arguing and persuading others, and in silencing any truths which her own conscience suggests, will by degrees deprive her of the power of thinking justly, and as her judgment becomes weaker, her management will be more and more preposterous and apparent, and her success consequently very rare.

In fact, sincerity is as essential to the health of our minds as wholesome food and pure air are to our bodies. Whatever may be our other deficiencies and defects, this sterling virtue should be our sheet anchor. This alone ought to secure to us the friendship, esteem, and confidence, of our social and relative connections, and by this may we best rescue from sinking into corruption, our good and amiable qualities and endowments; this will counterbalance in our minds the effect which wordly cares, pleasures, and hopes, have in diminishing their purity and lustre.

Among the causes of self-deception, pride and vanity must be numbered, since it is evident that they blind the understanding, and teach it to value unduly either the gifts of nature or fortune.

Mrs. L.—Do not some persons contend for the utility of these two propensities, the one keeping us from degrading our natures, and the other urging us to the attainment of excellence on some point or other. If this be true, and if they really be instruments of improvement, how is it that the moralist calls them vices of the mind?

Mrs. B.—It is a part of the wise constitution of our natures, that our passions, guided by reason, should be instrumental of good, furnishing us with a variety of induce-

ments to pursue our true interests ; yet, without the control of reason, we know how productive the passions are of mischief and misery in the world. All, therefore, that the moralist requires, is their government, not their utter extinction, which would deprive us of an essential part of our intellectual nature.

Pride, in its usual acceptation, is an opinion of our superiority, far beyond what we can justly entertain. In different individuals we see it variously directed : some pride themselves on intellectual, others upon personal gifts : some derive to themselves merit from their ancestry, and others value, more than they deserve, the favours of fortune. In all these cases, admiration, submission to the will of judgment, and sometimes adulation, are required from surrounding connections and dependents, while the return granted (degrading the objects on whom it is bestowed,) is either condescending affability, or contempt and scorn. Pride is easily mortified when the homage it demands is not duly paid ; and by this mortification many disorders of the heart and mind are engendered or cherished,—unjust anger, dislike, revenge and tyranny, ill-humour, and the loss of that cheerful spirit which is common to those only who are neither discontented with their fellow-creatures, nor with themselves or their lot in life.

By the indulgence of this passion, habits of expense not consistent with prudence, are sometimes adopted ; poverty is deemed a disgrace, and to avoid its appearance the reality is incurred ; and, what is worse, pride frequently produces a disdain of laudable exertions for independence. They who have been thus influenced have chosen to eat the bread of charity, and have preferred their children to be dependent on the bounty of others, rather than to be known to the world as capable of overcoming the frowns of fortune, by an honourable employment of their talents, so that meanness, a quality apparently contrary to the nature of pride, is the result.

Pride produces unamiable feelings towards our fellow-creatures ; kindles and inflames petty feuds and jealousies among relatives and neighbours ; excites uncandid and severe reflections upon each other's conduct and measures ; renders the heart swollen with self-importance, and the whole world a cipher, in comparison to itself. Indeed, it would be endless to enumerate all the evils and consequences attendant on pride.

MRS. L.—Shall we inquire into the nature and effects of vanity ?

MRS. B.—Vanity is considered as a meaner vice of the heart than pride ; the one believing in, and asserting its claim to the superiority, to which vanity only pretends ; vanity is solicitous of admiration and praise, but not scrupulous to deserve them. When, however, it is not attended (as is often the case) by a weakness of parts and an unsound judgment, it may prove an incitement to real improvement, and give a spirit at once eager to attempt, and equal to overcome difficulties and obstacles, which to the humble and diffident would appear insuperable.

In young women, vanity is sometimes turned from frivolous pursuits and delights, and converted into an amiable desire to please, and to obtain the approbation of worthy and estimable people : this promotes in them the cultivation of good qualities, and the acquisition of desirable attainments. Yet regarding vanity as it is most commonly beheld, we should affirm it to be hollow and deceitful, and the origin of female folly in every shade and degree.

To attract and please the eye by personal attractions and by gay and fashionable attire ; to obtain notice and admiration by the supposed possession of talents and acquirements, exceeding what is usual ; to be signalized by the splendour and éclat of routs and parties ; to affect a striking or novel manner, and to entertain peculiar notions, which may obtain some kind of distinction where real merit is wanting, are among the chief objects which

woman's vanity has in view. Sacrificing three parts of an existence, wasting the whole mental and rational powers, for the sole gratification of fluttering in the atmosphere of admiration, during a few short hours of life ; expending in the brilliancy of a single night, a sum not inferior to the year's income ; envying those whom superiority renders rivals, and detracting from their merit ; indulging the fretfulness to which the disappointment of false pretensions has given rise, are some of the effects of woman's vanity.

It is vanity, also, which exposes young women to the impertinence of undisguised flattery, and leaves them open to the folly of interpreting it into the language of admiration. It is vanity which induces still greater breaches of prudence and propriety, kindling the train of flirting and coquetry, which, if not ending in essentially injuring a woman's character, always diminishes its respectability. It attaches a suspicion and apprehension, that levity of manner will end in levity of conduct, and is the symptom which betrays to the sensible part of society, a woman's unfitness to maintain the propriety, and to perform the duties of a wife or mother.

Mrs. L.—I do not think an opinion of this kind, formed from the gayety and inconsiderateness of a young woman's manner, is always just. I have known some, who have drawn upon themselves, not only the animadversions of crabbed and malignant people, but even the censure of the candid and liberal minded ; yet these, notwithstanding, have proved themselves possessed of many valuable and desirable qualities, when in after-life they have been drawn into exercise ; on the other hand, I have known one or two young people, who have been marked as patterns of propriety, and who have imposed on opinion by a grave exterior, while their hearts and minds have been so ill-regulated, if not corrupted, as to cause the end of their admired courses to be far from correct, and which

exposed a system of art and management in them scarcely credible.

Mrs. B.—It would be very uncandid not to make every allowance for juvenile gayety of heart, and, indeed, I know not who would desire to impose any constraint, which would diminish the proper and natural enjoyment of all the amusements of youth. It is the levity of manner excited by vanity which should be checked, and not the animation to which a happy disposition may give rise. The one is harmless and pleasing; the other designing and contemptible; liable to the ridicule of the sarcastic, and to the pity and reprehension of the considerate and reflecting part of the world.

But whether unmarried or married, propriety of deportment is essential to woman's good report. This is peculiarly the case with the young married woman, who should always bear in mind, that she no longer singly abides by the consequences of her own conduct, but involves another in the degree of respectability which she herself maintains. A husband is almost equally degraded, and certainly always deeply mortified by his wife's dereliction from propriety; and when she becomes a parent, her duty is imperative to hand down to her children an unsullied name and reputation. The greatest injury and injustice a mother can inflict upon her daughters, is the stigma which her imprudent levity casts upon them, and which is scarcely ever to be removed by their own exemplary demeanour. A mother's delinquency often mars her daughter's happiest prospects in life, distancing from her the honourable and virtuous part of the community, and lessening the probability of her forming any desirable intimacies, or a connection in marriage, equal to the expectations she might have had, if shame had not been attached to her name.

Mrs. L.—I have observed that young women so circumstanced, are subject to severer strictures and reflections

than others, upon their general manners; and especially are not spared, if they betray what are supposed to be hereditary symptoms of impropriety.

Mrs. B.—And I think with great injustice and cruelty. She who suffers inconveniences brought upon her by a parent's misconduct, is very likely to be more circumspect; and to avoid falling into similar errors, unless she has always been under the guidance and influence of her mother, and through the medium of filial affection has been taught to view her errors with too lenient a judgment. Very often, however, the case is different; and feelings have been bitterly excited in young women, towards the parent who has subjected them to such odium and degradation. Perhaps this is scarcely to be censured, but must be added to the list of grievous evils which attend such a case.

An easy manner and sprightly conversation can never subject a woman to any reproach, provided the one is free from affectation and from any design to attract peculiar notice, and the whole thread and substance of the other shows innocence of mind, and the simple desire to amuse and to be amused. Not even the poisoned shafts of envy can injure a woman's fame irremediably, if she be only true to herself; and careful that she does not corroborate slander by any word or deed of imprudence. Suspicion will arise and attach itself for ever to a woman's character, if her conduct warrants it; but if her general deportment prove that good principles and a strong sense of decorum guide and regulate her conduct, she may safely defy slander, even in its most envenomed form.

Fortitude under affliction and misfortune, with a resigned spirit when these are irremediable, are the virtues which next present themselves for our consideration.

Fortitude, although it is deemed a manly virtue, is by no means rare in women. Many are the instances among

us of admirable endurance of pain, and of patient submission to the will of Heaven. Many a wife, in the hour of adversity, has been the almost cheerful support and comfort of her husband ; has subdued her own feelings, or kept them, with the firm hold of fortitude, from overwhelming him, or even from adding to his sorrow ; has cheered him with hope, or fortified his mind to endure with patience.

MRS. L.—Fortitude is not, I suppose, dependent on personal courage, or women would not often rank it among their virtues.

MRS. B.—It is a virtue of the soul, and consists in a firm and resolute spirit to undertake any task which duty enjoins, and to persevere to the completion of that duty. Reason and reflection are its chief support, and therefore personal courage, though useful as a coadjutor, is not absolutely essential to it. Fortitude does not uniformly belong to those whom strength of body and vigour of mind render fearless in spirit, nor is it incompatible with feminine weakness of form, and delicacy of mind and constitution.

The fortitude of women is chiefly of a passive kind ; diminishing their apprehension of evil, and preparing their minds to receive and support it with calm magnanimity, and with meek submission to the will that decrees it. A firm and patient spirit deprives misfortune and pain of half their poignancy, and to cultivate such a state of mind is equally recommended both by heathen and Christian philosophy, which may be considered as a test of its value and importance : for it is not every virtue that heathen wisdom has enjoined, which can be thus strengthened and enforced by Christianity.

MRS. L.—You say that fortitude is supported by reason and reflection ; but how often do these desert us in our time of need ! To reason and reflect appear to be impossible when sudden calamity attacks us, and during the

first moments of our grief, we fancy that self-command and composure will never return to us.

Mrs. B.—It is very true ; sorrow will overpower us for a time, and nothing can prevent it. Indeed it would not be natural, nor would it answer the end for which it is permitted in the world, if it were received with indifference. They, however, who have not murmured though they have mourned in affliction, generally perceive some silent effect to be working in their hearts during the season of grief, which afterwards enables them to acknowledge the wisdom and mercy of the blow, which has struck them. They have, perhaps, been awakened by it, from a state of thoughtlessness, and from the neglect of what should have been their chief concern, the approbation of Heaven ; they may have been roused from a state of security into which a long term of health and prosperity had betrayed them, and which had made them forgetful either of the instability of all temporal good, or that to Him who had given it, ‘ they had a deep debt of gratitude to pay, and to prove it by dispensing to others some of the benefits conferred on them. It is by affliction, a language not to be misinterpreted, that the Benefactor whom they had neglected recalls them to their duty, softens their hearts towards himself, teaches them the just value and use of earthly blessings, and how to resign them when He wills it.

Such should be the effect of grief upon our hearts ; but after its first violence is passed over, we should commence the task of rousing ourselves into some mental or bodily exertion, by which our minds may be restored to their usual state of energy.

If this exertion be not attempted, grief becomes a habit of indulgence, which it may not be easy to break ; and which may end in despondency, weakening both mind and body.

Mrs. L.—How may fortitude be acquired ?

Mrs. B.—Its foundation may be laid in the character at

an early period in life, by the judicious efforts of a parent, who should give her children an example in herself of perseverance in what she deems right to be done, and of patient endurance of pain and sufferings, whenever they occur to her. She should encourage them to bear pain with as few symptoms of uneasiness as possible; and every effort they make should receive the reward of her approbation, bestowed in a degree proportioned to the extent of the firmness and patience displayed. Many of the vices of childhood arise from timidity and the apprehension of pain, defects which cannot be overcome by punishment; that would add to, rather than diminish the evil. It is by a gentle and constant encouragement, that a child may be induced to make efforts to subdue its own fears, and to endure pain patiently.

If this maternal care has not been bestowed, and in later life fortitude is to be acquired, it can only be done by ourselves: reason must tell us how unavailing it is to give way to apprehension of suffering, or to violent grief, and religion will point out to us that it is sinful as well as useless. What God has appointed for us to undergo, we cannot avert; but by patience and resignation we may obtain His favour, and may also prove that "by the sorrow of the countenance the heart may be made better."

Some young women have imagined it amiable to give way to the violence of their feelings, whenever occasion called them forth, entirely forgetting how much greater their merit would have been, had they struggled to restrain them within the boundary of moderation. Instead of this, they have selfishly added to the grief of those involved in the same trouble, by yielding up their self-possession, and to such a point, as to enfeeble both their minds and bodies. By this indulgence their sensibility became diseased, and they consequently were great sufferers, unable to support themselves or to solace others.

A command of the feelings may be difficult to acquire

in those who are quick and lively ; but as it certainly may be done, and as it gives a mental strength of great importance to women, it should be sedulously cultivated. How painful it must be to find ourselves incapable, from excess of feeling, to attend to the last offices and duties which our dying friends require from us, and to be compelled, rather than to disturb them by our grief, to intrust to hired hands the performance of the last offices, which filial, conjugal, or maternal duty would enjoin. Woman is no longer a rational being, when she has yielded up her reason to her feelings.

Presence of mind is a branch of fortitude, the most difficult of any to attain, because it requires coolness and intrepidity of conduct, to be exerted upon the emergency of a moment. Evils which we can foresee, we may with more ease fortify our minds to receive calmly, but sudden demands upon our strength of mind we are often unable to answer. Yet many a life has been sacrificed to a deficiency in presence of mind. Parents have seen their children perish by fire, suffocated, or lamed for life by accidents which they might have prevented, had all their senses been in proper order. Accidents, too, to ourselves might sometimes have been averted, had we not been terrified into measures, just the reverse of what we should have taken.

Mrs. L.—I think it follows, of course, that a patient and resigned temper are united.

Mrs. B.—Resignation is the effect of patience. It is completely opposed to a fretful and repining temper, admitting without a murmur the wisdom and justice of the hand which afflicts ; and the submission of the will to that wisdom, preserves the mind in a quiet and placid state, undisturbed by the anxiety and fear to which an impatient temper is liable. It is an affecting but improving spectacle, to behold pious resignation under any circumstances, whether portrayed during the ravage of disease on the

youthful form, causing its premature decay ; or when displayed in maturer life, under all the trials of adversity, aggravated by sickness.

With what different feelings we regard impatience under misfortune ; our commiseration is then unmixed with admiration, and while we pity, we would fain admonish the sufferer on the wisdom and duty of patience and submission, and remind him that by repining he cannot diminish the cause of his complaint, but may displease heaven irremediably. With such a temper in the time of adversity, the wife must be a torment instead of a comforting friend to her husband, proving herself to be selfish and unfeeling ; and leading to the belief, that her murmuring arises more from the diminution of some of the lesser gratifications of life, than from the blighted prospects and disappointed hopes of her husband, which may check the prosperity of his life, and the future welfare of his children.

I will now endeavour to give you a few hints respecting the conduct of a young woman, who may be unfortunately left a widow, and who finds that, added to her previous maternal cares, her husband has left her the guardianship of his children, and an executrix to his will. With regard to her own deportment, I shall merely observe, that when time has healed the wound which his death has inflicted, and when the season has elapsed which decorum has appointed for retirement from public amusements, and from scenes of gayety (supposed to be incompatible with the state of feeling of one recently bereft of the most intimate of human ties), the widow will probably be again seen in the world, and will again mix in her usual societies. She should, now, bear in mind, that, from the circumstance of her being left entirely to her own conduct, many eyes will be upon her ; and, from various motives, many will curiously examine into the circumspection and prudence of her conduct. If the breath of slander ought not to

reach her as a wife, it is even more essential to her, that as a widow it should be completely suppressed. She has no longer a protector to shelter her when reproached, nor to sanction with his approbation her future steps. She has to screen the name she bears from the very shadow of disrepute, because, besides, belonging to her children, he who owned it and bestowed it upon her can no longer defend and rescue it from calumny and disgrace.

A great vicissitude in a woman's circumstances and situation not unfrequently occurs upon the death of her husband; and in the higher rank of society this is often peculiarly severe. She who has been the mistress of splendid mansions, has had numerous establishments at her command, and the power to gratify every wish and desire as far as wealth could realize them, finds herself, all at once, obliged to inhabit only one humble dwelling, and to circumscribe her gratifications into limits, which to you or me might appear sufficiently ample, but which to her seems scarcely to extend beyond the pale of adversity. A widow thus placed has much need for the fortitude of which we have been speaking. And even those of an inferior rank have their trials and difficulties to support with dignity and composure.

During her temporary seclusion from general society, a widow can hardly employ her time more wisely, than in forming her plans, and arranging her future establishment and mode of living. In doing this she would do well to lay her intentions and wishes before those whom her husband has appointed, with herself, his executors, and the guardians to his children. Believing that he would join with her in these important offices none whom he did not consider qualified for them, both in regard to probity and ability, she cannot act more agreeably to his wishes than by consulting them, and confiding in their judgment, on all those points respecting which, as a woman, she is less able to decide wisely.

It often happens, however, that a widow and her co-executors and guardians are at variance ; she, tenacious of her power, jealous of their interference, and suspicious of their negligence in promoting her interests or those of her family ; while they, perhaps, are irritated and troubled by her ignorance in matters of business, and made angry by her want of friendly confidence in their intention, and in their desire to discharge the duties which friendship has imposed on them. Thus parties, who should go hand in hand in forwarding or rejecting the measures proposed with the view of promoting the welfare of a fatherless family, are, too generally, opposed to each other, and the wisest plans and best intentions are thwarted, by the interference of petty and ill-governed feelings. When a woman is satisfied as to the integrity and prudence of her co-executors, she will only be doing them justice, if she confide all matters of business to them ; seeking only to understand the measures they intend to adopt, that her judgment and acquiescence may accord with each other.

A prudent woman cannot be blind to the advantages which may accrue to her children, from the unanimity she preserves with their other guardians ; and how much for their interest it is, that the friendship entertained for their father should revert to them, and be exerted in supplying to them, as much as is possible, the paternal care of which death has deprived them.

Besides the propriety of cultivating the good will and friendship of her co-executors, a widow should adopt every means of attaching her children peculiarly to her husband's family and connections. The petty feelings which sometimes interpose themselves between herself and her partners in office, mutually disturbing their good humour, are as often at work in closing the hearts of her husband's relations against both herself and children, and in checking their desire to stretch out a helping hand to any of the family who may in the course of time require it. If in

pecuniary matters, a young family are independent of their paternal relations, still they may stand otherwise in need of their assistance. Who can say that the introduction and sanction of a grandfather or an uncle may not ensure the favourable commencement of a young man in his professional career, or place and support him in a rank of society, to which he might not easily attain by his own merit? A widowed mother, too, may find her influence over the minds of her sons insufficient to direct their conduct, as they advance towards manhood, in the course which her wishes and views for them direct; and in such a case she may have her authority effectually aided and enforced by the manly advice which with propriety may proceed from the lips of a near relation of a deceased father. It must not, however, be forgotten, that just causes may exist to induce a woman to distance herself from her husband's relations, and may render her unable to expect from them services such as these. But, more frequently, the causes of disunion between them and herself are jealousy and suspicion.

Mrs. L.—A widow, very seldom, I think, keeps up so extensive a circle of friends and acquaintance as during her husband's life. Is it well that she should contract it so much as is usually done?

Mrs. B.—Her circumstances may require a restriction of this kind, which, however, should be made with much consideration, and should not be more limited than what prudence or necessity may demand. Valuable friendships formed by the father should be regarded as a part of his children's inheritance, which the mother must not suffer to be diminished by her indifference and neglect. And in contracting her circle in society, she should consider the advantage of her children more than her own inclinations, and yield up the acquaintance chiefly of those from whom but little good can be expected. It is not rank or fashion that should guide her choice: these are unsubstantial ad-

vantages, which may determine her selection of "summer friends," but, in choosing solid friends, such considerations should have no weight with her, in comparison with the pre-eminent distinctions of virtue and wisdom.

Sometimes a widow withdraws from society, because she cannot receive company in the style to which she has been accustomed; weakly allowing feelings of mortified pride to govern her, instead of consulting what may be advantageous for her family. Many, too, become indolently inclined, in regard to society; and, rather than overcome their aversion to the fatigue and trouble of visiting or receiving company, leave their children to form intimacies unknown to them, and perhaps prejudicial to themselves.

Another error into which a widowed mother is liable to fall, is that of over-indulgence of her children. To guard against this maternal weakness, should be more than ever her earnest aim, since paternal firmness is no longer at hand to counteract its injurious effects. Without regard to puerile wishes for relaxation, she should steadily persevere in the plan of education which she has formed for her children, preserving, with conscientious care, the precious years of their youth from waste and neglect.

Thus, the widow who strives to fulfil every obligation to her children has no sinecure; but, with Heaven's blessing on her endeavours, she will have her day of compensation; her success will be honoured in the world, and affectionately and dutifully acknowledged by her children, who, with one voice, "will rise up and call her blessed." And when she arrives at the evening of her life, her serenity of mind will be undisturbed by any painful retrospections of her conduct, while pious hope will predominate in her soul over the apprehension and dread which human weakness will ever attach to the awful transition from this state of being to another.

MRS. L.—Old age to the young is a formidable antici-

pation; and it must require some share of philosophy to meet without dismay the approach of gray hairs and every other infirmity,—the forebodings of life's winter and its common termination.

Mrs. B.—It is an encouragement in well-doing, to feel assured, that an honourable discharge of the duties incumbent on the earlier seasons of life will best prepare us to encounter old age and its attendant infirmities. Age, though not pleasing in contemplation, has its privileges, honours, and enjoyments. It has, also, its virtues and its vices.

The privileges and honours of the aged consist in immunity from arduous and great exertions; in having a just claim upon the services, love, duty, and reverence of those upon whom they have heretofore conferred the benefit of their attention and cares, and whom a grateful remembrance should now animate to discharge in full the weight of obligation which they owe them.

The pleasures of an old age, which is not embittered by any peculiar disease, or unusual degree of infirmity, arise chiefly from the enjoyment of the fruits which the virtuous exertions of earlier life have produced, in beholding the prosperity and happiness of children, and in the renewed feelings of paternal tenderness, excited by grandchildren, whose vivacity and playfulness forcibly recall to the pleased recollection of the aged the infancy and childhood of their own immediate offspring. It is often remarked that the affection of a parent is not only renewed towards our grandchildren, but that it returns even with greater force than it originally possessed; a kind provision of nature, which assigns to every period of life those dispositions and emotions which are the best calculated to promote enjoyment. How various and how numerous are the instances which show us that Providence, far from intending our present state as a mere scene of probation, endows us with every means and capacity of happiness, did not

the indulgence of passion and error on our parts oppose its beneficent designs! To infancy is allotted that vivid, but transitory sensibility to pain and to pleasure, which renders the trifles that make the sum of its existence a source of excitement, without which neither the mental nor the bodily powers would expand and strengthen. In old age, we are mercifully deprived of those keen emotions, which our frames, far from requiring, could not support: impressions, though permanent, are not lively; while a placid sense of the comforts immediately around us, and an exemption from those anxieties which the energetic and the busy experience, prove, where the mind has not been corroded by habitual deviations from right, the frequent portion of declining years.

The sources of enjoyment, even those resulting from a mere state of ease and repose, are common to most old persons, and are equivalent to the active pleasures of his past life. But of a higher nature are the advantages of a well-stored mind, which can never be without some resource for its occupation and enjoyment, although its vigour may have been diminished by the effects of time. I remember a venerable, cheerful, contented old gentleman, who, for some years before he closed a life of eighty years' length, had lost his sight, and, being otherwise infirm, never left his room: during this period, his chief amusement was to repeat aloud Latin verses, which had been some of the literary acquisitions of his youth.

The virtues of old age are, like its pleasures, passive. They consist in good humour; kindness of heart, inducing a sympathy with others in those enjoyments, in which they can in reality never more participate; in benevolence and liberality, when the means for the exercise of these virtues are not wanting; in patience and resignation, under all its trials; and in keeping the mind constantly prepared to yield up cheerfully to God the spirit which still animates the enfeebled body.

A temper habitually complaining, is a defect which age increases. It is true, that in our declining years we must suffer, and complaint is the voice of suffering; but as it does not alleviate, it ought not to be indulged. I can scarcely imagine any affection or duteous solicitude, that will not be disheartened and tempted to shrink from the performance of its tender offices, if the last years of aged relatives are spent in unvaried complaints and repinings. A discontented and querulous temper must, also, be checked by those in years, who wish to keep alive the affection and unwearied alacrity of attention among their friends. Elderly people naturally regard with complacency the usages and modes of life to which they were formerly accustomed, viewing with great dissatisfaction all innovations of the present time, and censuring, without sufficient consideration, those who adopt them. They forget that time has effected a great change in themselves, as well as in every thing else; therefore, as change is a thing of course, they should, if they cannot accommodate themselves to it, regard it with indifference, as a circumstance which may not long affect them. Their displeasure and angry expressions are ineffectual, and, therefore, misplaced; and it becomes a matter both of prudence and of duty to cease that advice, which provokes but does not influence.

Parsimony is another defect attributed to age. At a time of life when to accumulate wealth seems peculiarly unnecessary, as far as they are themselves concerned, the habit of hoarding is often strengthened to an excess, and gives the aged not only the appearance of penury, but even the endurance of some of its hard realities, in addition to all the bodily suffering they have to undergo. "We brought nothing with us into this world, and we can carry nothing out with us," is a truism which has often struck me, in its simplicity, as setting forth the folly of amassing wealth, with more force than a long train of arguments.

It is not probable that the man who has been penurious in his youth should become liberal in his old age, when habit involves us as a chain, from which no power can induce us to release ourselves; but it is surprising, though common and vexatious, to observe those who have never been remarkable for parsimony before, becoming miserly in the extreme as they approach the vale of years.

It has been said that women are less addicted to this pitiful vice than men, most of whom being either engaged, during the greater part of their lives, in acquiring wealth or in the care of property, have had their tendencies to avarice encouraged by the anxiety in which the necessary charge of their affairs has involved them. As circumstances generally lead women rather to expend wealth than to acquire it, their tendency is to prodigality more than to avarice. But as these defects seldom suddenly enchain the affections of an aged person, it is evident their origin must have been earlier in the day of life; and the consequence of their indulgence in the previous stages of life is to bring on an old age unhonoured and despised.

Mrs. L.—There is one important obligation from which women, whether young or old, are most commonly exempted,—I mean, making a will.

Mrs. B.—Sometimes, however, it does occur that women have property at their own disposal, entirely independent of their husbands. When they have the power to will it, they should not defer this duty until alarmed by illness; but while in health, their judgment vigorous, and their faculties unimpaired by disease, should their wills be conscientiously and justly made. There can be no doubt, that if her husband be living, a woman should leave the use of her property to him during his life, and to her children subsequently; unless, indeed, any serious defects in the father should render it requisite to leave his children, if possible, independent of him.

In willing property among children, the natural desire

of a parent would be to do it impartially ; but there may be circumstances in her family, which may render it necessary to vary the proportion of that which is left to each individual. If one child, for instance, inherit more from the father than the other children, or have property from other sources, it will be only justice in his mother to lessen proportionably his share in her property, and to add it to those of the other less favoured children. If, too, one of the children should labour under mental or bodily infirmity, common humanity, independent of parental affection, would demand that the share of so helpless a mortal should, if possible, be ample enough to supply him with all essential comforts, and to secure him from dependence. If her family be free from any of these circumstances, justice requires an equal portion of her property to be left to each child, with a similar proportion of any property of which she may have a reversionary right.

To my notions of parental justice, it appears seldom necessary, and often cruel, to act in the manner which custom frequently sanctions, with regard to an eldest son, who is often endowed most liberally with the gifts of fortune by his progenitor ; while the junior part of the family labour under the difficulties of a very narrow income, or languish in dependence on the great man of the family. The better sense and better feeling of the present age are gradually abolishing this unfair distinction, unless there be a large family-residence or a title to support. Many there are, no doubt, who have been induced to form mercenary marriages, and have been driven to acts of servility, by the unequal and unjust distribution of paternal property.

When a woman has no children, her own discretion will, of course, guide her in the distribution of her property ; and I wish it more frequently occurred than it does, that the necessity or merits of individuals were taken more into account, by those who, favoured by fortune, have it in

their power to raise from indigence the worthy and the suffering.

But I am sorry to observe, that our sex have been remarkable rather for the abuse than for the proper application of property, and it has, with too much appearance of justice, been inferred, that power is ill-placed in the hands of a woman. We must, in candour, allow, that, if we have usually more disinterestedness and generosity than men, we are more liable to be governed by sudden emotions, and to act upon impressions of anger and of caprice. As we do not frequently investigate matters with coolness, or weigh opinions with deliberation, we are likely to be the dupes of flattery and of deception. Nay, in a single state, we sometimes indulge attachments of a most extraordinary and frivolous nature: it would scarcely be credited, were it not proved by many facts, that women could place their affections upon cats, dogs, and monkeys, with such unbounded folly, as to bequeath large sums of money for their support. I do not apprehend that the other sex, who are far enough from being infallible, have ever committed themselves so grossly, or that, when they were conscious how many intellectual beings might be benefited by their wealth, they would bestow it on objects so unworthy. Folly, however, is of both genders; and, perhaps, shows itself more frequently, and ostensibly in disposing of what requires wisdom and equity in its assignment, than in some of the less important concerns in life. Every one knows the story, I fancy, of the old gentleman who left a very large fortune to a lady, to whom he had sat opposite for some years at the opera. Her countenance had not, I am told, one prepossessing expression; her benefactor knew nothing more of her than her name and appearance. The bequest did not, I have been informed, devolve upon the most deserving quarter possible; and the old gentleman, to satisfy this whim, left a numerous tribe of poor relations destitute and disappointed. Another

old man, who has a landed property of 12,000*l.* a year, lives at the rate of 2000*l.*, and disgraces himself by disgusting acts of meanness to accumulate a board of wealth ;— and for whom ? A strolling player, a fortieth cousin whom he has never seen, who is scarcely a relation in more than name, and who will probably do any thing but follow his example.

Every one, before she attempts to make her will, should examine carefully into the state of her feelings, that she may not be influenced either by angry feelings or even by undue partiality. They who are only stewards of earthly blessings here below, must do justly while living, and, as far as it is in their power, should ensure justice after their death.

I must now say farewell to you for a season, and not, I am afraid, before you are heartily weary of this long discourse.

CONVERSATION II.

RELIGIOUS DUTIES.—PRIVATE DEVOTION.—FAMILY-WORSHIP.—ATTENDING CHURCH.—VISITING THE SICK.—CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.—DEATH-BEDS.

Mrs. B.—Having in our last conversation discussed the importance of possessing right principles of conduct ; and the necessity of early establishing them in the character, let us now examine how they may be best maintained undisturbed in later life, by our wilful inclinations and desires. Human frailty never permits virtue alone to have such entire dominion over us as to render us invulnerable to temptation : and to these we are daily liable while in

pursuit of worldly advantages and distinction. Virtue is not always sufficient to compel the sacrifice of these advantages, when they cannot be obtained by upright conduct. The worldly wise may act well, because they find it most expedient in the furtherance of their views ; but to the mass of mankind a more powerful aid to virtue is indispensable : religious wisdom and religious feeling must be its sheet-anchor, and its solace, under the trials and sacrifices it may exact. Upon this we may cast our temporal happiness, with more chance of safety than can be even hoped for by enclosing it in the strongest hold of which prudence can boast ; and also by this only can we realize that hope in futurity which smooths life's dreariest passage, and renders the hour of its close more blessed than that of its commencement.

I lament my inability to express to you, as forcibly as the subject demands, the value of habitual piety. To regard our Creator as also our benefactor and friend, to whom we refer all the blessings and pleasures we enjoy ; to live under the consciousness of His omnipresence ; to rely without doubting, that so long as we continue intent on well-doing, He will never utterly forsake us ; and to have our hearts always prepared to worship, and our lips to praise Him, will produce so pleasurable and composed a state of mind, that to neglect its attainment can only be considered as an act of self-denial worthy the character of human folly.

Some minds are more prone to religious fervour than to that tranquil state of feeling which results from the habit of devotion, but to this it is not comparable : fervour may rouse the mind to greater occasional exertions, and these, by producing good resolutions, may tend to lessen an attachment to the world ; but this excitation will remit, and during the intervals, the world will resume its influence over the heart. The religion, however, which has taken unremitting hold of the affections will maintain over them

a constant and almost equal government; and even should they swerve from this government, and transgress in duty, compunction and contrition will follow, and render them less liable to err again.

To cultivate habitual piety is true wisdom, and, although this important task may be best learned early in life, it is not at any season unattainable. In its commencement we should first endeavour to acquire, and at all times to maintain, such just notions of the nature and perfections of the Being we worship, as the dim sight we obtain of Him will allow us. These will enable us to perceive that our worship is rational, and calculated to advance our natures towards the Being who is our great centre of perfection. We shall perceive, that to obey His laws is not only to promote our own individual welfare, but also to enable us to communicate good to others, though in a limited degree, even as He imparts good to all.

Besides satisfying our understanding with regard to the reasonableness of our worship, our hearts should be deeply impressed with a sense of its duty. If gratitude be due to an earthly benefactor, who bestows favours sometimes from ostentation, from secret views for his own advantage or credit, and never, perhaps, with perfect disinterestedness; if ingratitude to such a benefactor be considered base and unworthy, the characteristic of degeneracy, what epithet can be given to ingratitude towards a benefactor perfect beyond our comprehension; who, knowing our infirmities, our omissions, and transgressions of his laws, yet withholds not from us the hand of support, mercifully extends it in forgiveness, and sheds upon us every supply our necessities demand? His mercy descends upon the just and upon the unjust.

Mrs. L.—There are many other powerful reasons, I am aware, in favour of the duty of worshipping our Creator, but gratitude is, I think, that which warms and enlivens our affection towards Him more than any other;

presenting Him to us in the endearing but reverential light of a parent, in whom we behold only what is good, and from whom we experience only good.

Mrs. B.—And as children should we constantly present ourselves before him in acts of devotion, and by which means only can these filial feelings towards Him be improved and maintained. Negligence produces habitual indifference ; a common but fatal state of mind in matters of religion, and from which there is less probability of being roused to a sense of unworthiness, than there is of the reformation of an acknowledged reprobate.

A spirit of devotion must be cultivated by regular and repeated acts of worship, and these should take place at those seasons when the mind is least in danger of being unprepared for them, from any vivid impressions made upon it by the circumstances of life. Under such impressions religious acts would be liable to be performed with coldness, instead of fervour, and with a distraction, instead of a fixedness of thought upon the one great object : this would consist in the service of the lips without the co-operation of the heart and mind, and thus be rendered useless to ourselves and unacceptable to Heaven.

Stated times of prayer may be considered as a mean of inducing an habitual return of the thoughts, to the subjects connected with religious feelings ; such as gratitude and praise, humility and submission. Have you ever read the life of Sir Henry Wotton ? A similar reason is there given for always praying in the same spot : he mentions in terms of approbation the advice given by a monk to his friend, “always to perform his customary devotions in a constant place, because in that place we usually meet those very thoughts which possessed us at our last being there.”

Morning and evening are obviously the most suitable seasons for religious meditation and prayer. Not only are they epochs in our lives of which we ought to take account, but they usually find us in a better frame of mind

for serious reflections, than we should be at any other period of the day. The morning meets us comparatively untroubled by worldly perplexities, but needing preparation to encounter them; and the evening discovers us alone; the world closed from our view, its daily business over, and all its frivolous impressions yielding to the sobering powers of darkness and silence. A spirit of piety will not, however, brook the restriction of its services to any stated times; but, as circumstances arise to give cause to gratitude, or to awaken grief and solicitude, it will either breathe forth praise or homage, or will bend its spirit in cheerful resignation to the Divine will.

Mrs. L.—Though you properly recommend private devotion to be frequent and at stated times, I hope you do not regard long-continued prayers as necessary. The warmth of heart which ought to accompany us throughout our religious services requires a little humouring; for, if heavy demands be made upon it at one time, it will desert us, leaving our lips moving, while our minds wander into less hallowed regions, and in closing our devotions we remain dissatisfied with ourselves from the consciousness that our lips have performed an act in which the thoughts and feelings scarcely participated.

Mrs. B.—There is in general more danger of the mind resting satisfied with the *work done*, without requiring any effect from it on the dispositions and resolutions. Your remarks respecting long prayers cannot be disallowed; and our great Example himself, aware of our inability to pray ardently for any continued length of time, has laid on his disciples an injunction not to follow the example of the heathens, who think they shall be heard for their much speaking; or to use vain repetitions, which extend, but do not render prayer acceptable and efficacious. Private devotion is without value, unless it be the medium of a solemn intercourse of the soul with its Maker, with whom

(I feel assured) a few minutes spent in such an intercourse will far outweigh hours passed in repeating unfelt prayer.

To be strict in the performance of private acts of devotion is a duty which we owe to ourselves : to observe family-worship is our duty to others. This, also, should be performed at regular and stated times, with seriousness and warmth ; the service should be short but impressive, adapted equally to the comprehension of the young, and of the dependants whom we assemble around us for this solemn purpose.

Family-worship is, at this time, in great disuse. Excuses are easily found by those who are disinclined to the practice, and in the case of others, causes may really exist to render its regular observance scarcely feasible. Unless it be done regularly, I am of opinion it had better be omitted altogether, because I would not have my children or servants perceive, that a business of such import was allowed to give place to any of the trivial circumstances of life.

But before the practice be abandoned, every circumstance should be well weighed, and a sincere desire entertained to overcome any obstacles which may oppose themselves.

Each family may be considered as a little society, united under one chief, whose regulations, besides regarding the present maintenance of good order within the domestic circle, should have every tendency to prepare the various individuals of which it is composed for the fulfilment of the laws and obligations enacted by God and man, and against which they are most liable to rebel, who have been least accustomed to judicious domestic government. To further this view, they who preside over these little societies, should endeavour to present in themselves models of virtue for imitation ; and to these models additional beauty and value may be added, by uniform attention to devotional services. Virtue alone will always receive homage

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